The He/ Not He: *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd* in Ibn ʻArabī and the Gluon of Opposites.

Sultan Saluti

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree

University of Haifa

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Philosophy

April 2020

The He/ Not He: *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd* in Ibn ʻArabī and the Gluon of Opposites.

Sultan Saluti

Supervised by:

Dr. Arnon Keren

Dr. Samuel Lebens

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree

University of Haifa

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Philosophy

April 2020

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

(Supervisor)

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

(Supervisor, Chairperson of Master's studies Committee)

To Samuel Lebens

Contents

Abstract IV-V

Note on Arabic Transliteration VI

Introduction 1-5

1. **Chapter I: Historical Background to Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd** 6-20
   - 1.1 Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī and the notion of self-annihilation in the divine 6-9
   - 1.2 Al-Ḥallağ and the *ḥulūl Šuhūdī* (witnessing incarnationism) 9-11
   - 1.3 Neo-Platonism and the conception of *emanation* 12-15
   - 1.4 Ibn Sīnā's modalities: "through itself and through another" and the way to *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* 16-20

2. **Chapter II: *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* in Ibn 'Arabī** 21-36
   - 2.1. The process of "creation" – The self-manifestation/disclosure of God 21-36
     - 2.1.1. The Sacrosanct Effusion/Holy Overflow (*Fayḍ Aqdas*) 22-29
     - 2.1.2. Hieratic/ Heirophanic Effusion/ Sacred Overflow (*Faḍ Muqadas*) 29-32
     - 2.1.3. The simultaneous occurrence of the stages 32-33
     - 2.1.4. The shadow of God: The supreme *Barzaḥ* 33-36

3. **Chapter III: *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* and Gluon theory** 37-58
   - 3.1. Denying *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* in Ibn 'Arabī 37-38
   - 3.2. Accepting *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* in Ibn 'Arabī 38-40
   - 3.3. Several interpretations of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* 40-52
     - 3.3.1. Panentheism 40-47
     - 3.3.2. Pantheism 47-50
     - 3.3.3. Priority Monism 50-52
   - 3.4. *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* and the *Gluon* theory 52-58

4. **Chapter IV: Possible Criticism of the Thesis and replies** 59-69
   - 4.1. Objections to Dialetheism and replies 59-63
   - 4.2. Objections to gluon theory and replies 63-69

Conclusion 70-72

Bibliography 73-79

The He/ Not He: *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd* in Ibn ‘Arabī and the Gluon of Opposites

Sultan Saluti

§Abstract

The doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* concerns the relationship between oneness, or unity, and existence. *Waḥda,* means unity or oneness, and *Wujūd* means existence or being; thus – Oneness of Being, or Unity of existence. It involves an unequivocal assertion: there is only one real being which is God and everything else is just a manifestation, or a confined reflection of Him.

There is an intensive debate as to whether this doctrine can be attributed to the Sufi mystic and philosopher Muḥyydīn Ibn al-‘Arabī. Nonetheless, putting various pieces of his thought together, it’s hard to deny that such a doctrine emerges as a background commitment. This debate owes to the fact that it is hard to render the doctrine compatible with Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought, since nowhere in his writings does he explicitly declare that he endorses it.

The first to ascribe this doctrine to Ibn al-‘Arabī was Ibn Taymiyya (d.1328).[1] Yet Ibn Taymiyya’s take upon it, is that it constitutes disbelief in the Orthodox God of Islam. Since, according to him, this doctrine does not make a distinction between God and His Creatures. Thus, he accuses Ibn ‘Arabī of blasphemy (*Shirk*). Ibn Taymiyya, it seems, relies upon verses from the Qur’ān that assert a distinction between God and the Cosmos; such as Qur’ān’s (42:11): “There is nothing like unto Him”. This verse, similar to other verses, expresses God’s transcendence over – *and* his distinction from – the world. A Failure to distinguish between God and the world would, therefore, be at odds with the Qur’ānic conception of *Tawḥīd* (Oneness). However, the next clause in this verse has, as it might seem, something of a contradictory significance, as it states, “and He is the Hearing, the seeing”. The first clause of the verse argues for God’s transcendence over the world, but the second clause speaks of His similarity.

[1]See Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd (2002): *falsafat alta’awīl: derāsa fī ta’awīl al-Qur’ān ‘inda muḥī-aldīn bn ‘Arabī.* Al-haya’a al-miṣriya al-‘āma li-l-kitāb, 20-21.

This work will, in a sense, unpack these two statements and demonstrate that Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd is* compatible with the Orthodox God of Islam; that it does not result in disbelief.

This thesis has three main claims:

1- Ibn ‘Arabī *does* subscribe to the doctrine of *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd*.
2- Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* has a structure which is similar to that of Graham Priest’s *gluon* theory.
3- Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd is* compatible with the Orthodox God of Islam.

As will become clear, although Ibn ‘Arabī never makes a clear statement that he *subscribes* to the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, there are many passages in his writings where it is apparent that he *does*. Central to the *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* of Ibn ‘Arabī is the assertion that this world is “He/not He” (*Huwa/ la Huwa*), i.e. God/ not God. To explicate this statement, and other passages which, *prima facie*, seem incoherent and contradictory, this thesis argues that we should appeal to non-classical logic, as embraced by Graham Priest and his gluon theory. Gluon theory endorses dialetheism, the view that contradictions can be true. Following this step, and throughout the entire work, particularly in chapter three, it will be clear that this doctrine *is* compatible with the Orthodox God of Islam. Indeed, it will be apparent that there *is* a distinction between God and the world. Since God is the only real existent, and this world is His Shadow – the world both *does* and does not exist. God, by contrast, only exists – He doesn’t not exist.

Those who simply cannot embrace dialetheism or gluon theory, might resist my reading of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* in Ibn ‘Arabī. However, it is important to bear in mind that Ibn ‘Arabī is a mystic who places great weigh upon mystical experience. Thus, he might respond that as soon as you experience the Perfect Being– an experience which is limited to a few – you will come to the conclusion that this world *does* and *does* not exist. As a result, this conclusion might give you a good reason to espouse a logic which embraces contradictions. In which case, dialetheism and the gluon theory, which it underlies, if only in the light of mystical experience, deserve serious consideration.

Note on Arabic Transliteration:

Arabic Transliteration follows, for the most part, the "Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft" conventions, (exceptions include *dh* instead of *ḏ*, and *gh* instead of *ġ*), which are briefly outlined below:

ā	alif-א-الف	‘	ע-ع
’	ء	gh	غ، ע'
b	ב-ب	f	פ-ف
t	ת-ت	q	Qāf- ق
ṯ	Thaa’-ث	k	ק-ك
ǧ	jīm-ج	l	ל-ل
ḥ	ḥāa’-ח -ح	m	מ-م
ḫ	Khā’a’-כ-خ	n	נ-ن
d	ד-د	h	ה-ه
ḍ	ḍād -ض	w	ו-و
dh	dhal-'ד-ذ	ū	وُ
r	ר-ر	ī	י-ي
z	ז-ز		
s	ס-س		
š	ש-ش		
ṣ	ṣād-צ-ص		
ṭ	Ṭāa’-ט-ط		
ẓ	ظ		

Introduction:

Ibn ‘Arabī (1165-1240) was an Andalusian Sufi Mystic and a philosopher. He emphasizes the value of mystical experience over that of the intellect.[2] Mystical experience is characterised religiously, as a unique or an immediate encounter with the Divinity, in the sense of a unification with It, and an awareness of Its presence.[3] As a Sunni Andalusian, Ibn ‘Arabī belongs to the mystical tradition which is similar to Ismā‘īlī Neoplatonism, of the mystical-philosophical kind, albeit, without its Shi‘i doctrines.[4] He combined this type of mysticism with his Sufi heritage,[5] creating an original synthesis that had a profound influence upon later mystics.[6] Nevertheless, this work will not focus on mysticism or other related issues, but rather, it will chiefly be concerned with the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuğūd*.

Those of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s commentators who engage with the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuğūd*, are divided primarily into two parties: there are those who *do* ascribe it to him, and those who deny that he subscribed to it. The former party is divided, mainly, into two camps: those who refuse to define the doctrine in terms of other philosophical categories or theories. Henry Corbin, for example, argues that any such attempt would distort it.[7] The second camp *do* attempt to define it in terms of other philosophical categories. For instance, Abū al-‘Ilā ‘Affīfī explained *oneness of being* in terms of pantheism, in his book: *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhid Dīn-*

[2] Ibn al- ‘Arabī typically uses the word *Unveiling* (*Kashf*) to designate God’s unveiling Himself to the mystic through his experience. See Binyamin Abrahamov (2007): “Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Theory of Knowledge part one”. In: *Journal of the Muhiddin Ibn ‘Arabī’s Society*, vol 41, 13-15. On the superiority of the unveiling over the intellect, see Ibid, Part two, 22.

[3] See Michael Ebstein (2014): *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-‘Arabī and the Ismā’īlī Tradition*. Koninklijke Brill Nv, Leiden, 22. There are several mystical types that were common in medieval Islam. Michael Ebstein divides them into five types. However, I will not elaborate on these types for this is not central to my work. It suffices to mention Ibn ‘Arabī’s mystical type. For more on these types, See Michael Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-‘Arabī and the Ismā’īlī Tradition*, 24-25.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibn al-‘Arabī is influenced by various Sufi teachers such as Ibn Masarra, Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī and others. See Franz Rosenthal (1998): “Ibn ‘Arabī Between “Philosophy” And “Mysticism”: “Sufism and Philosophy Are Neighbors and Visit Each Other” fa- inna-attaṣwwuf wa-t-tafalsuf yatajāwarānī”. In: *Oriens*, vol 31, 1-3.

[6] See Michael Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-‘Arabī and the Ismā’īlī Tradition*, 24-25. For instance there is a branch of Sufi metaphysics which is called *Akbariyya* – which is derived from Ibn ‘Arabī’s nickname – “Al- Šayḫ al-Akbar”.

[7] See Henry Corbin (1969): *Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn ‘Arabī*. Library Editions: Islam.

Ibnul 'Arabī.[8] The scholars who don't attribute the doctrine to Ibn al-'Arabī at all, typically claim that it is hard to draw any system from Ibn al-'Arabī's writings.[9] I will side with those who attribute *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* to Ibn 'Arabī.

The Structure of the thesis:

The thesis consists of four chapters:

The first chapter gives a short background to notions and doctrines that may have informed Ibn 'Arabī's *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. I will address four such notions: (1) Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī's *Self-annihilation in the Divine*, where the mystic becomes unconscious of everything that characterizes him and of everything other than the divine. This is a phenomenological annihilation, and in no way does it express a spatial or a metaphysical annihilation.

(2) al- Ḥallāǧ's *Witnessing Incarnationism (ḥulul-šuhūdī)*: according to which, the Sufi can lose himself completely in the divine. This is also, a symbolic rather than a metaphysical incarnation, which symbolizes, so to speak, God's revealing Himself to the Sufi in an exceptional way.

(3) Neo-Platonism. Plotinus, who was a central figure among Islamic Philosophers, developed a model, according to which everything flows or *emanates* from the One. The Intellect is the first thing to *emanate* from the One; the Soul, then *emanates* from the Intellect; and Nature *emanates* from the Soul, and designates the end of the process.

(4) Ibn Sīnā's vocabulary – *through itself* and *through another*. According to Ibn Sīnā, there are two categories of being: (a) God who is a *necessary existence through itself* (*Wāǧib al-Wuǧūd bi-dhātihi*). i.e. he is the cause of Himself – He exists *a se*; and – (b) everything other than God, which are all *necessary through another* (*Wāǧib al-Wuǧūd bi ghayrihi*), i.e. through God. I will contend that the relationship between God and the world, as depicted by Ibn Sīnā, renders God the only existent

[8] Abū al-'Ilā 'Affīfī (1939): *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhid Dīn-Ibnul 'Arabī*. Cambridge University Press, London, 54.
[9] See for instance William Chittick (2011): *In search of the lost heart: explanations in Islamic thought*. State University Press, 74.

who exists in the strictest sense of the word, which might have paved the way for the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* in Ibn ʻArabī.

The second chapter constitutes the first strategic move of the thesis: a hermeneutical reading of Ibn ʻArabī, through close adherence to his texts. This will elucidate several pivotal notions and issues and will help to clarify the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*.

The third chapter contains the second strategic move of the thesis, which has two stages: (1) I engage in a thorough criticism of some common interpretations of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. I will deal primarily with three interpretations that cast *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* through the prism of another doctrine, namely:

(a) Panentheism, which tries to hold a middle position between theism and pantheism. The panentheist suggests that God encompasses everything, and yet is non-identical with the world. I will refute four varieties of Panentheism as candidates for understanding *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. The most compelling of all– the *metaphorical* or *analogical* variety makes an analogy between the mind and the body on the one hand, and between God and the world, on the other. Even this variety fails to capture Ibn ʻArabī's *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* as it asserts an interrelatedness between God and the world which does not accord with Ibn ʻArabī's God, who is independent of the world.

(b) Pantheism which argues for an identity between God and the world. This can be rejected, I argue, since it overemphasizes God's immanence and overlooks His transcendence. God's transcendence is too central to Ibn ʻArabī's thought to countenance his being a pantheist.

(c) Priority Monism, according to which the whole is ontologically prior to its parts, does not resonate with *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* since it ascribes real existence to those parts. This doesn't fit with Ibn ʻArabī's reckoning, according to which God's manifestations ("parts") do *not* have a real existence, or strictly speaking, they both *exist* and do *not* exist.

What unites all these interpretations of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, it seems to me, is a tacit commitment to the fundamental principles of an Aristotelian logic; particularly, to Aristotle's law of non-contradiction, the LNC. This law, in its straightforward form, states that contradictions cannot be true. Either the sun is shining now, as you

look at the sky, or it is not. It cannot be shining and not shining in the same place and at the same time. A true contradiction would be unacceptable.

The second stage (2) of this chapter, will argue for a new reading of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* that defies classical logic. Thus, I will appeal to *gluon theory* and to the associated doctrine of dialetheism, with its non-classical, paraconsistent logic.

The notion that *gluon theory* can explain the doctrine of *oneness of being* was first advanced by Behnam Zolghadr.[10] Nevertheless, it seems to me, that Zolghadr misinterprets a central concept in Ibn ʻArabī, namely, the concept of existence. Consequently, his argument needs some modifications that I advance in this work.

As I will illustrate, *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* has a structure similar to that of gluon theory. That is because the Supreme *Barzaḫ,* (i.e. the phenomenal world) is, according to Ibn ʻArabī, the He/Not He (i.e. God/ not God); that is to say: it *exists* and does *not* exist. The Supreme *Barzaḫ*, is, as I shall explain, identical therefore to Graham Priest's 'gluon of everything' and 'gluon of nothing'.

The fourth chapter addresses possible criticism of my thesis. These criticisms divide into two sets: the first set includes five arguments against dialetheism. If dialetheism is obviously false, or worse – incoherent – then my reading of Ibn ʻArabī can be written off as uncharitable. Accordingly, I must address these concerns.

The most compelling argument in this set of criticisms, is to the effect that contradictions cannot be true. This argument appeals to the LNC. In response, I will argue that there are meaningful contradictions that *do* seem to be true such as "the man is bald and not bald", and that we therefore have (at least *prima facie*) reason to reject the LNC.

The second set of criticisms involves two objections to gluon theory. Again, if gluon theory is obviously false, or worse – incoherent – then my reading of Ibn ʻArabī can be written off as uncharitable. Therefore. I must also address these concerns.

The first objection is advanced by Sungil Han. He contends that the gluon cannot be both an object and not an object. His argument relies upon the indiscernibility of identicals, a principle he himself should reject if he is to be

[10] See Behnam Zolghadr (2018): "The Sufi Path of Dialetheism: Gluon Theory and Wahdat al-Wujud". In: *History and Philosophy of Logic*. Vol, 39, Issue 2. Taylor and Francis Group, 99-108.

consistent. The second objection is proposed by Takashi Yagisawa. He argues that the problem of unity can be solved by *his* theory, which he calls g_y theory. However, I will argue that the g_y theory fails to solve the problem of unity, since it doesn't give us unified objects, but rather unified-like ways.

To summarise: I will argue that (1) other interpretations of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* fail (as I hope to show in chapter three); -(2) the structure of gluon theory fits with Ibn 'Arabī's writings ; and that (3) gluon theory and dialetheism shouldn't be discounted as obviously false (as I hope to show in chapter four). It follows that the best interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* would deny the LNC and model itself on gluon theory.

§ 1. Chapter I: Historical Background to *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd*

Ibn al- ‘Arabī, as already mentioned, never uses the term *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* (*oneness of being*). In addition, he does not reveal its tenets systematically, rather, those tenets are dispersed enigmatically in his writings. They are sometimes barely noticeable. Due to this fact, it requires a painstaking effort to reformulate and reframe those principles into a coherent and comprehensible doctrine. Moreover, uncovering the original philosophical motivation and the sources which Ibn ‘Arabī draws on in his writings, constitutes a very formidable challenge, which either fails to interpret Ibn ‘Arabī, or at the very most succeeds, however, only partially. In this chapter, I attempt to introduce some doctrines and notions advanced by earlier thinkers that presumably influenced Ibn al- ‘Arabī’s doctrine of *oneness of being.* I will examine four such historical influences.

As with his own ideas, Ibn ‘Arabī does not treat others’ views in a systematic manner, addressing each doctrine separately and thoroughly, similar to Al-Ghazālī in his attack on the philosophers. Rather, he refers to those views very briefly and succinctly. Moreover, when he makes passing reference, implicit or explicit, to others’ doctrines, it is often unclear which particular thinker he is engaging with.

§ 1.1 Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī and the notion of self-annihilation in the Divine

One figure with whom Ibn al-‘Arabī certainly engages is Abū Yazīd (or Bayāzīd) al-Bisṭāmī (d. 874), who is considered to be one of the greatest mystics ever known to the Islamic world. Al-Bisṭāmī is mentioned in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* 143 times, more than any other Sufi.[11] Abū Yazīd did not leave any writings whatsoever; rather, “We have received the most important of his mystical experiences through reports and *šaṭaḥāt* (ecstatic expressions), collected by his disciples”.[12] Those ecstatic expressions are the utterances through which the Sufis, in the midst of a mystical experience, deliver their outrageous and “aggressive sayings”.[13] Those sayings are often audacious in character, since they express religiously and culturally

[11] See Binyamin Abrahamov (2011): “Ibn al-'Arabī and Abū Yazīd Al-Bisṭāmī”. *Al-Qanṭara*. Bar Ilan University, 369.
[12] Muḥamad bin al-Ṭayeb (2008): *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd fi al-tasawuf al-islāmī*. Dār al-Ṭalī‘ah, Beirut, 31.
[13] see Carl W. Ernst (1985): *Words of Ecstasy*. State University of New York Press, Albany, 39.

controversial content about God or the prophets,[14] such as the very well-known saying by al-Bisṭāmī ,"Glory to me! how great is my majesty! (*subḥānī mā aa'ḍam šā'nī*)";[15] al-Bisṭāmī, in this ecstatic outburst, seems to be comparing himself to God.

Abū Yazīd's comparison of himself to God is likely to have been an expression of a concept of annihilation (*fanā'a*).[16] *Fanā'a*, or self-annihilation in the divine presence, is a very sophisticated mystical state, where the Sufi or the gnostic gets rid of his human and mundane characteristics, and merges with the Divine, so that:

> …He annihilates in the Divine, thus he becomes Him (God), and God becomes he. He [i.e. the Gnostic] becomes the speaker, not the addressee, wherein there is no distinction between him and his Beloved [i.e. God], and then his soul desires to express itself.[17]

In this state, the Gnostic's or the mystic's consciousness is absent. That is to say, he is unaware of his existence. Time and space lose their foothold as well. The mystic seeks to annul every physical barrier between him and His Beloved, leading consequently to his self-annihilation in the Divine. He is unaware of anything other than God.

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that this self-annihilation is psycho-phenomenological in character and not metaphysical. i.e., the mystic's self is not annihilated in the strictest sense of the word: in the sense that it loses its being. But rather, what gets annihilated is the mystic's own sense of his characteristics, as a human being. i.e., phenomenologically, it seems as if the mystic is completely unconscious of everything that individuates him; and of everything other than the divine. Briefly put, this is a mystical state, wherein temporarily, the Sufi loses his self-consciousness. He feels nothing and is unaware of nothing but the Divine, who he loves and seeks the most. This doctrine is likely to have influenced Ibn al-'Arabī's *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd.*

[14] Ibid, 38-40
[15] See Vincent J. Cornell (2007): *Voices of Islam*. Prager Publishers. Post Road West, Westport, 251.
[16] It is argued that this concept is present also in other Sufī writings. "However, Bisṭāmī, gave it a special meaning, wherein it denotes the self-annihilation in the Divine presence". Muḥamad bin al-Ṭayeb, *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd fi al-tasawuf al-islāmī*, 32
[17]Muḥamad bin al-Ṭayeb, *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd fi al-Tasawuf al-Islāmī*, 36

As has been pointed out by Bin al-Ṭayeb, the notion of psycho-phenomenological self-annihilation, gleaned from the mystical outbursts of Bisṭāmī "becomes theoretically sophisticated, in Ibn 'Arabī ",[18] where it becomes metaphysical in its very nature. That is, what is annihilated with Ibn 'Arabī, is not merely one's consciousness, or one's mundane characteristics, but rather everything that is created by God. Indeed, everything other than God has no real existence. In sum, this annihilation implies, as will be illustrated later, the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuğūd*, where God becomes the only real existent.

Another fundamental notion in Ibn 'Arabī's *Waḥdat al-Wuğūd* which seems to have its roots in Bisṭāmī, is the notion of God's manifestations (*tağaliyāt*). Ibn 'Arabī, connects the Qur'ān's 51:56 ("I created the Jinn and humankind only to worship Me"), with Bisṭāmī's saying, when he asked God "through what may I come near to you?" and God answered "through that which I do not possess, lowliness and neediness", in order to assert that God created people in order to worship Him.[19]

True worship is to acknowledge that everything is a manifestation of God, and people were only created in order to worship Him. However, not everyone really *knows* that everything is a manifestation of God. This knowledge is limited, according to Ibn 'Arabī, only to "People of the true path" [*ahl al-ṭarīq*], i.e. to mystics and saints. Only those people *really* worship God for only they truly *know* that He is manifested in everything. As Ibn 'Arabī says:

> ...And the Real (al-Ḥaqq) says, in the true saying (*al-Ḥadīṯ al-ṣaḥiḥ*) that God is the hearing, the seeing and the hand of the servant [i.e. man], so that the poor is lacking nothing but God – in his lack of hearing and seeing. Thus, his hearing and seeing are God's theophanies, and everything is as such [i.e. God's theophanies], and how subtle is God's manifestation in things.[20]

The idea seems to be this: People of the path only really become conscious that they have seeing or hearing, when they come to appreciate the sense in which they lack them. More importantly, this emphasizes to them that when they lack something, it is

[18] Ibid, 45.
[19] See Binyamin Abrahamov, "Ibn al-'Arabī and Abū Yazīd Al-Bisṭāmī", 379.
[20] Ibn 'Arabī (1968): *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiya* (henceforth, *Futūḥāt*). Volumes I-IV, Beirut. Vol. II P,16. ;Ibn 'Arabī (2010): *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiya* (henceforth, *Futūḥāt*). Ed. Maḥmoud Matarji, 8 Vols. Dār al-Fikr. Vol. III, 29.

as if they lack God. Since these things, that they are lacking, are nothing but God's theophanies. They are well acquainted with the verse that says: "we shall show them Our signs, that is, that which signifies Us, upon the horizons and in themselves",[21] which means that all things are nothing but God's manifestations. Once they come to know this, i.e. that God is manifested in everything, and that He is the source of everything they have, they come to worship Him.

To sum up, Ibn 'Arabī's *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* is influenced by Bisṭāmī's notion of self-annihilation in the Divine. In addition, one of the doctrine's most important conceptions, namely, God's manifestations, seems to be a corroboration of Bisṭāmī's report that we only come to know God when we come to know what it is we lack (namely: everything, since all things are a manifestation of God).

§ 1.2 Al- Ḥallāǧ and the *ḥulūl-šuhūdī* (witnessing incarnationism)

Another important Sufi, who espoused a doctrine similar to that of Bisṭāmī and might have influenced Ibn al-'Arabī's doctrine of *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd*, is Al-Ḥusayn bin Manṣūr al-Ḥallāǧ (executed 922). Al- Ḥallāǧ was accused of heresy and as a result was executed. The basis of this accusation was al- Ḥallāǧ's "extreme" ecstatic expressions (*šaṭaḥāt*) such as the very well-known and much disputed statement: "I am the Real (*ana al-ḥaqq*) [i.e. God]",[22] which had been construed as implying incarnationism (*ḥulul*) – God's incarnation in a human being.

Al- Ḥallāǧ's saying (viz. "I am the Real"), is not a mere utterance, expressed during an advanced mystical state; but rather, as al-Ṭayeb points out, it "summarizes a thoroughgoing theological doctrine".[23] Al- Ḥallāǧ's ultimate objective and desire was to achieve a perfect unification with God, a state which is known as *šuhūd* (witnessing). This is an extraordinary ecstatic (*wiǧdānī*) experience wherein the mystic becomes unaware of himself and is mingled with the Divine.[24] The Sufi seeks nothing in this state, but to be "He" i.e. God. He loses himself completely in the

[21] Qur'ān's [41:53]
[22] "...And I said, 'if you don't know Him [i.e. God] then know His effects, and I am that effect and I am the Real (ana al-haq)". Louis Massignon (1913): *Al- Ḥallāj, Kitāb al-Tawāsīn*. Paris Librairie. Ed by Paul Geuthner, 51
[23] Muḥamad bin al-Ṭayeb, *waḥdat al-Wuǧūd fi al-tasawuf al-islāmī*, 62.
[24] See Herbert W.Mason (1995): *Al-Ḥallāj*. Routledge, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, 81.

Divine. His ego is annihilated within God. There are, metaphorically speaking, no two selves but one-self which is the He (i.e. God), or the He-He (*Huwa Huwa).* As a result of this union, the mystic expresses those ecstatic sayings, such as al- Ḥallāğ's ("I am the Real" *ana al-ḥaqq*). As Herbert W. Mason observers:

> In that power of union with the real, one can say *ana'l Ḥaqq* without trace of ego or presumption: His individual and unique existence, *huwa huwa*, is my existence, *anī*, in a complete realization, *ḥaqīqqa,* of oneness, *wahdat ash-shuhūd,* known in witnessing.[25]

This is not, despite accusations to the contrary, a spatial or even metaphysical incarnation, where God "descends" upon man. In fact, al- Ḥallāj states emphatically,

> And he who thinks that the Divine Nature is united with human nature is an infidel, for God's essence and attributes transcend creatures, and nothing resembles God in anything... and he who argues that the Creator is in some place or is imagined...is an infidel.[26]

This incarnation is rather a symbolic one. That is to say: it symbolizes, so to speak, God's speaking to one's soul. Or to put it in another way, it is as if God reveals His majesty and beauty to the Sufi in an exceptional way, and by no means does it allude to a physical incarnation in his body. This state, therefore, does not differ from the previous one, i.e. that of the self-annihilation in the divine, expressed by Bisṭāmī. Since by the same token, the purely phenomenological incarnationism reveals to the mystic the meaning of God's oneness, which requires a phenomenological annihilation of everything other than God. As Abu al- 'Ilā 'Affīfī points out:

> [Al- Ḥallāğ's incarnationism] is the very same annihilation, and it is the state of the Sūfī knowledge where the meaning of oneness is revealed… and his will, act and power are annihilated in God's will, act and power and he reaches self-annihilation.[27]

That is to say, the mystic in this state is aware that everything is annihilated in the divine. He is aware that his act and will are nothing but God's act and will, as he is

[25] Ibid, 82.
[26] Akhbār *Al-Ḥallaj Aw Monajayāt al-Ḥallaj* (2006). Edited by Louis Massignon and Paul Kraus, 51.
[27] Abū al-'Ilā 'Affīfī (1964): *altasawuf: alṯawra al-ruḥiyya fī al-Islām*. Dār al-Š'ab li-l-Ṭibā'aa wa-l-našr. Beirut, 163.

annihilated in God. This phenomenological content reveals to the mystic the extent to which he is actually ontologically dependent upon, and in some sense inseparable, from God.

From incarnationism to *Oneness of being*

The above experience, wherein the Sufi is unified with God, and becomes the "He-He", reveals to him that he has no separate and real existence whatsoever. Indeed, his existence is dependent upon God's existence, and hence it is unreal. As al- Ḥallāğ says:

> The Real [*al-ḥaqq*] is the Truth, and the servant (i.e. man) is unreal (*bāṭel*) and if the Real and the unreal are unified, thus "God dash the truth upon falsehood, and destroys it, and thereupon it departs. And for you is destruction from that which you describe" (Qur'ān 21:18).[28]

The Sufi is stunned, so to speak, by God's existence which is revealed to him in his *witnessing* experience. He realizes thereupon that his own existence is, in some sense, unreal. In this mystical "ascension" to God, the Sufi realizes that he is, again, in some sense, a pure nothingness. In which case he perceives that he shall destroy his illusionary "self" in order to get closer to God. Furthermore, this self-annihilation before God, as al-Ṭayeb points, out, "designates a negation of everything other than God".[29]

Consequently, this doctrine of *witnessing*, advanced by Al-Ḥallāğ, where the Sufi through his ecstatic journey *witnesses* the *incarnation* of the Divine nature in him, gives us a powerful inclination of a doctrine that espouses *oneness of being* or *Waḥdat al-Wuğūd.* For indeed, it implies that the existence of the mystic, as well as the existence of everything, is derived from the existence of God and, on top of that, this existence is not fundamental. The existence of creatures, as we will discover with Ibn al- 'Arabī, is nothing but God's manifestation. In other words, God's manifestation is the source of everything that *exists*.

[28] Akhbār *Al-Ḥallaj* edited by Louis Massignon and Paul Kraus, 60.
[29] Muḥamad bin al-Ṭayeb, *waḥdat al-Wuğūd fi al-tasawuf al-Islāmī*,75.

§ 1.3 Neo-Platonism and the conception of *emanation*

Another possible source from which the Šaykh's *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* might have acquired its rationale, is Neo-Platonism. Plotinus – the father of Neo-Platonism – was a pivotal figure among Islamic philosophers in the middle ages. His model of *emanation* had been endorsed by many philosophers, such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. According to Plotinus, oneness (unity) marks existence, that is, unity is a condition of being. He argued that the more essential unity a thing has, the more deeply and permanently it can exist. And the thing which fits this description the most is the *One.*[30]

The *One,* according to Plotinus, is characterized as a simple existent and as being beyond knowledge, and beyond the perception of the Intellect (i.e. inconceivable); succinctly, it is ineffable.[31] This fact, as Anthony Robert Booth maintains, "has inspired what has been called negative theology".[32] Namely, the reckoning that our attitude towards God can be framed only in terms of – what is He not (assuming that God is identical to the *One*).

Negative theology is motivated by the thought that God's radical indivisibility entails that we can say very little, directly, about God. Because there isn't enough structure in Godself for us to get a grip on Him. Nonetheless, we can talk about God's effects over the universe. We can talk about what God brings into being, even if we cannot say very much about God Himself. Accordingly, Plotinus developed a theory of *emanation* that outlines how things flow into being from the One.

Plotinus held that everything *emanates* or "follows" from the *One* in accordance with a specific model. According to this model, the first thing which is derived or emanated or "flows" from the *One* is the Intellect (which is second only in the hierarchy of being to the *One*). The Intellect is the place where the archetypes of all beings reside.[33] This might be perceived as an intelligible universe, that resembles

[30] See Anthony Robert Booth (2017): *Analytic Islamic Philosophy*. Palgrave Macmillan,34
[31] See Plotinus (2018): *Enneads*. Edited by Lloyd P. Gerson. Translated by, George Boys Stones, John M.Dillon, Llold P.Gerson, R.A.H. King, Andrew Smith and James Wilberding. Cambridge University Press. V 3, 567-568. See also Peter Adamson (2016): *A History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps.* Vol 3, *Philosophy in the Islamic World.* Oxford University Press, 25.
[32] Anthony Robert Booth, *Analytic Islamic Philosophy*, 34.
[33] Plotinus, *Enneads*, V 9, 634.

the Platonic absolute intelligible world. From the Intellect, the third principle of the world flows, which is the Soul. The Soul is the source of life and motion of the whole cosmos; it is what makes all living beings by breathing life into them.[34] It is also an image of the Intellect, that is, it is an expressed principle of the Intellect, just as spoken words are an expressed principle of thinking.[35] The end of the process of *Emanation* is Nature (or matter) that flows from the Soul. This is the physical world, that is referred to as the "world of generation and corruption" [*ʻĀlam al-Kawn wal-fasād*].[36]

Ibn al- ʻArabī's model of "creation", which is the self- disclosure (*taǧalī*) of God, is similar to Plotinus's. It is similar in the sense that everything at the end of the day is a manifestation of God, i.e. everything "emanates" from Him. In addition, and in line with Plotinus, according to Ibn al- ʻArabī, the first thing that was manifested from God, was the *Intellect.* As he says: "the first thing that was *created* by God is the Intellect, which is also the Pen (*al-qalam*)".[37] Then He created the *Universal Soul* "which is the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfuḍ*)".[38]All other cosmic entities, *emanated,* or manifested from God, *according* to the Neoplatonic Scheme.[39]

Another remarkable affinity between Ibn ʻArabī and Plotinus is the circular vision of creation. According to Plotinus, the *One* is located at the center of the *Intellect*, the *Soul* and the physical world, wherein these constitute concentric circles. That is, ontologically speaking, it is as if the physical world encircles the Soul which encircles the Intellect, which lastly encircles the *One*. These circles, however, are immaterial spheres.[40] That is to say: they are not sensual or physical circles, in the sense that they have a circular *shape*. Rather, this is a metaphor which implies a constant ontological sustenance between these three existents: The Soul is contained and sustained by the Intellect, which in turn is contained and sustained by the One.

[34] Ibid, 534.
[35] Ibid, 536
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt.* Dār al-fikr, IV 43; Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, II, 395.
[38] Ibid.
[39] See Michael Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al- ʻArabī and the Ismāʼīlī Tradition*, 56. See also Ibn ʻArabī*, Futūḥāt*, Dār Ṣādir, II, 395, where Ibn ʻArabī enumerates things that were emanated or manifested from God.
[40] See Michael Ebstein (2018): "The Circular Vision of Existence: from Ismāʻīlī writings to the works of Ibn al- ʻArabī". *Shii Studies Review*, Vol 2, Issue 1-2. NV, Leiden, 158.

Likewise, Ibn ‘Arabī views creation as (metaphorically) having a circular structure (however it differs slightly from that of Plotinus). That is, it is as if God (i.e. the Real) stands at the center of a circle, and each point on the circumference of this circle signifies a finite being. All those beings have been given *existence*, equally, by the Divine Command, “Be!” (*al-amr al-ilāhī Kun*).[41] And since the circle is infinite – as it has neither a beginning nor an end – God’s command, as a result, never ends, signifying that those beings are infinite.[42]

Notwithstanding, two fundamental discrepancies between Ibn ‘Arabī and Plotinus can be observed:

A) the *activity* of the *agents* (i.e. manifestations) in Ibn ‘Arabī: the process according to which the universe is brought about according to Ibn ‘Arabī is active, in contradistinction to the passive model of Plotinus’ *emanation;* since he [Ibn ‘Arabī] attributes activity to God’s manifestations. The bringing about of the universe is symbolized, for Ibn ‘Arabī, by an *intercourse* relation between a preceding entity and that which follows it in the hierarchy of manifestations. The *intercourse* between the *Intellect* (male) and the *Universal Soul* (female) brings about *Ṭabī‘aa* (Nature) and *Habāa* (Dust) or Prime matter. Thus, the *Intellect* will be the *first father,* and the *Soul* will be (relative to him) the *first mother*; yet the *Soul* is also considered to be a *second father*, since,

> …After knowing the *second father* from the possible entities, which is also a mother relative to the *Pen* (i.e. the Intellect), their spiritual and holy *intercourse* (i.e. the *intercourse* between the *Soul* and the *Intellect*) brought about *Ṭabī‘aa* and *Habāa* [43].

Then, an *intercourse* between *Ṭabī‘aa* and *Habāa* brings about the *Universal Body.* This triadic relationship (i.e. the two entities and the encounter between them that

[41] See William Chittick (1998): *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Cosmology*. State University of New York Press, 229. See also Ibn ‘Arabī, Dār Ṣādir, *Futūḥāt*, I, 260.
[42] Ibid, 167.
[43] Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, Dār Ṣādir, I,140; *Futūḥāt,* Dār al-fikr, I, 361. See also Naṣr Ḥāmid Abu Zayd, who explains this by saying: “and through the intercourse and reproduction between the Intellect and the Soul, Ṭabī‘aa and Habaa' were born. And thus, the Pen [i.e. the Intellect] is considered as the first father, and the board [i.e. the soul] is considered the mother”. Naṣr Ḥāmid Abu Zayd, *hakaḍha Takalama Ibn ‘Arabī*, 180.

generates a third entity), continues to generate more and more entities, resulting in the whole cosmos,

> Thus, the first mother (i.e. the *Soul*) gave birth to *twins*: first was *Nature*, and then the *Habāa*; for *Nature* and *Habāa* are *brother* and *sister*. Then *Nature* and *Habāa* were considered *father* and *mother* respectively, and their *effect* (i.e. their *intercourse*) brought about the *Universal Body*. Then birth had occurred in the world according to a specific order.[44]

B) the notion of the hierarchy of manifestations: That is, while according to the Neo-Platonic system, there are different grades of beings,[45] Ibn al -'Arabī's philosophy grants no place for such a hierarchy. An *apparent* hierarchy is perceptible, but only among God's manifestations and among the so-called distinct beings. But since, in the final analysis, for Ibn 'Arabī there is only one Being, which is God, the Real (*al-ḥaqq*), the *Many Beings* do not exist in the strictest sense of the word – so there can be no real hierarchy.[46]

In sum, Ibn al- 'Arabī's *Waḥdat al-Wuğūd*, is influenced to a great extent by Plotinus' doctrine of *emanation*, according to which everything emanates from the *One* in a hierarchical order. The first to emanate from the *One* is the Intellect, which is followed by the Soul, with matter being the end of the process. In a similar vein, Ibn al-'Arabī's self-disclosure of God is characterized as hierarchical; however, this hierarchy, in contradistinction to Plotinus's system, does not signify a hierarchy among *beings*, but rather a hierarchy in manifestations; or, the hierarchy of beings is a mere appearance, and a useful way to characterize the process from our earthly perspective. For according to Ibn 'Arabī, apart from God, there are no real entities in the strictest sense of the word.

[44] Ibid.
[45] As the Intellect is a real entity after the One in the Hierarchy of
Being, then it is followed by the soul which is inferior to the intellect but superior to the material world and so on. All those entities have real existence and are not intelligible.
[46] See Abdul Haqq Ansari (1999): "The Doctrine of Waḥdat al-Wujūd". *Islamic Studies*, vol 38, issue 2. Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad, 155.

§ 1.4 Ibn Sīnā's modalities: "through itself" and "through another" and the way to *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*

Another source from which it is feasible that Ibn 'Arabī partly derived his *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* is the work of Ibn Sīnā. Avicenna, or Ibn Sīnā, is considered to be one of the most influential philosophers in the Islamic world – if not the most. His philosophical oeuvre influenced theologians, philosophers, and Sufis throughout the Islamicate world.[47]

Ibn Sīnā distinguishes between two main categories of existence: (1) necessary existence through itself (*wāǧib al-wuǧūd bi dhātihi*), and (2) possible existence through itself (*momken al-wuǧūd bi dhātihi*).[48]

Necessary existence is had by God who exists *a-se*.[49] Indeed, Ibn Sīnā argues that God has no cause. For if He were to have a cause then His existence would not have been necessary, as he says:

> But whatever exists by something [else], if considered in itself, apart from another, existence for it would not be necessary. And every [thing] for which existence is not [found to be] necessary – if [the thing is] considered in itself, apart from another – is not a necessary existent in itself.[50]

In addition, God is simple according to Ibn Sīnā. That is to say, He has no parts, for: "Necessary Existent cannot be at all a composite".[51] Indeed, if He were composite, then we would need something to distinguish between its parts. And the composite whole would depend upon these parts for its composite existence – but then, it wouldn't be a necessary existent in itself; not if it were dependent upon its parts.[52] And it wouldn't help to stipulate that it's parts are merely contingent, because it's absurd to think that a necessary existent could be composed of contingent parts. Moreover, there can only be one being that has this species of existence. If there were two such beings, Ibn Sīnā argues that there would be no way of distinguishing

[47] See Jon McGinnis (2010): *Avicenna*. Oxford University Press, 244-254.
[48]See Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*. A Parallel English-Arabic Text. Translated, Introduced and annotated by Michael E.Marmura. Brigham Young University Press, 29-30.
[49] Ibid
[50] Ibid. P. 30
[51] Ibid.
[52] See Peter Adamson, *A History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps,* Vol 3*: Philosophy in The Islamic World*, 129-130.

between them; at least not without an appeal to a third entity, and then we would have entities that are necessary in and of themselves, *relying* upon a third entity for their individuation, which would be absurd.

The second species of existence, namely, possible existence through itself (*momken al-wuğūd bi-dhātihi*), is also presented by Ibn Sīnā as "necessary existence through another" (*wāğib al-wuğūd bi ghayrihi*), that is, through God,[53] and not through itself. Insofar as God exists, and eternally creates, the universe has to exist too. But God exists *a se*, whereas the universe is necessitated by God, and not by itself. For again, were it necessarily existent through itself, it would have to be identical to God.

The category of the "necessary through another" designates everything other than God. It can be conceived also by this formula: "possible-of-existence-of-itself, necessary-of-existence-by – (or through)-the-other". Yet this formula has proven problematic for some scholars. As, Salman Bashier puts it: "it seems to have contained two contradictory propositions: the world is possible in itself; the world is necessary by the other".[54]

Nevertheless, it does not seem to me that there is a contradiction here. To say that something is necessary in the sense that it cannot not exist, is different from saying that it is necessary through another, i.e. that it is necessary given a certain condition. As Jon McGinnis points out:

> [T]here is a difference between saying that something is necessary in the sense that it simply [cannot] not exist – as, for instance, the existence of God is supposed to be – and saying that something is necessary on a certain condition – as for example, given that two sets of two apples exist, then necessarily there exist four apples, although it is certainly possible that one or both of the sets of apples had not existed, in which case the four apples would not have existed.[55]

[53] Ibid.
[54] Salman Bashier (2004): *Ibn al-'Arabī's Barzakh*: *The Concept of the Limit and the Relationship between God and the World*. State University Press, 42.
[55] Jon McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 160.

Given that a creative God exists, then necessarily creatures exists, although they might not have existed [for they are merely possible], had they not been brought into existence by an external cause, i.e. by God. As Booth puts it:

> So perhaps what Avicenna is really saying is that the predicate *existence* denotes an accidental and not an essential property in everything except God – only the latter has *existence* essentially. Existence may yet be a necessary property of other objects, but not because of *their* essence – but still it is *essence* that determines their necessity, albeit the essence of *another* object.[56]

A close examination then, renders Ibn Sīnā as maintaining that there is only one essentially necessary existent who is God. He is therefore the only thing that actually exists in the strictest sense of the term.

Hence, it might be argued that this depiction of the relationship between God and the world, results in *oneness of being* or *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* – since in the strictest sense of the word, only God exists. At the very least, Ibn Sīnā paves the way for the emergence of such a doctrine, and it might have influenced Ibn ‘Arabī’s development of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. All one really needs to add to Ibn Sīnā’s doctrine is the notion that, in the strictest sense of the word, a being doesn’t *exist* unless it essentially necessarily exists. Then it will turn out that only *God* exists.

On top of that, one can notice a passage in which Ibn ‘Arabī appropriates Ibn Sīnā’s vocabulary “through itself” and “through another”:

> Although the levels that have entered into *wujūd* are nonexistent, they are imagined to have *wujūd*, for they are relations of nonexistence. These levels are “placement”. Each thing, whether existent or nonexistent in property, dwells in its level, whether its *wujūd* is necessary through its essence or through the other [my emphasis], or its *wujūd* is impossible.[57]

In addition to its employment of Ibn Sīnā’s vocabulary, this passage points again to the unreal existence of things other than God, as Ibn al- ‘Arabī claims that each level

[56] Anthony Robert Booth, *Analytic Islamic Philosophy*, 104-105. I will not elaborate in this issue here, since a dealing with Avicenna's metaphysics of modalities is beyond the scope of this thesis. I submit to the thought that there is no problem in Avicenna's vocabulary “through itself” and “through another”.
[57] William Chittick, *the Self-Disclosure of God*, 238. See also, Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, III, 419.

of existence (*wuǧūd*) is not real but is rather *imagined* to have "entered into existence".

A controversial aspect of Ibn Sīnā's view here is that it might imply, as al-Ghazālī understood it, that God had no freedom not to create, or that He might have had little choice in His creation.[58] The result might be that God has little agency in Ibn Sīnā. In contradistinction, Ibn al-'Arabī's God is more active, or possesses more agency, as He might *not* have brought about creatures. The only reason why God did bring about creatures is that He "wanted to know Himself in another image", put in another way, He wanted to know Himself differently.[59] As Ibn al-'Arabī cites the *Ḥadīṯ Qudsī* ("holy saying"), all over his oeuvre, that says: "I was a hidden Treasure, then I desired to be known so I created the world that I might be known".[60] There is no compulsion here to create, whereas Ibn Sīnā's God (allegedly) necessarily creates, even if what he creates doesn't exist necessarily in and of itself.

In sum, Ibn al- 'Arabī's doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* is possibly influenced by a variety of antecedent *doctrines* and notions, advanced by mystics and philosophers, whose influence was prevalent in the Middle Ages. I have unearthed four doctrines that likely played a role in the formation of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. The first notion is (1) the self-annihilation in God, developed by al-Bisṭāmī. This, as already explicated, signifies a phenomenological annihilation of the consciousness of beings other than God, which might have paved the way for Ibn al- 'Arabī's metaphysical annihilation of beings. Al-Ḥallāj expresses the notion of (2) incarnationism which results in an awareness in the Sufi of the illusory quality of the existence of things. In addition, it has been demonstrated that *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* shares some affinities with (3) Neoplatonism, especially with the notion of *Emanation*. However, some discrepancies were uncovered, most importantly, the notion of the hierarchy of beings in Plotinus that is replaced by a hierarchy of manifestations in Ibn 'Arabī. Finally, (4) Ibn Sīnā's modalities and his vocabulary of the *necessary through itself* and the

[58] see Oliver Leaman (2002): *An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, 24.
[59] See Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, where he says that "The One [i.e. God] 'desired' to know Himself in another image". Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Hākaḍa Takalama Ibn 'Arabī*, 214.
[60]Stephen Hirtenstein and Martin Notcutt (2007): *Divine Sayings: The Mishkāt al-anwār of Ibn 'Arabi.* Anqa Publishing, Oxford, *101*, 99.

possible by another, could be another source from which *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* draws its rationale and motivation.

Turning to Ibn al- ‘Arabī’s texts with these historical threads on the table, will help us to extract the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* from his words – and to understand its likely motivation – despite the lack of systematicity in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s writing style.

§ Chapter II: *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd* in Ibn ‘Arabī

In this chapter, I will elaborate upon Ibn ‘Arabī’s process of “creation” which is known as the self-disclosure of God (*tağalī*) or the self -manifestation of Him. According to this process, I argue, it will become clear that Ibn ‘Arabī does subscribe to the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*.

§ 2.1 The process of “Creation” – The self-manifestation/disclosure of God:

Ibn al- ‘Arabi’s process of “creation”,[61] strictly speaking, the self-manifestation of God, is a twofold process – It is comprised of two stages of theophany or manifestation. Succinctly put, these stages are:

1) The Sacrosanct Effusion/ Holy Overflow (*Fayḍ Aqdas*) which is articulated through God’s revealing Himself to His names. That is to say, “He shows His Names” their meanings, thereby unveiling potentials that are hidden in Him.
2) The Hieratic/ Heirophanic Effusion/ Sacred Overflow (*Fayḍ Muqadas*). This stage is the actualization of these potentials in a phenomenal world. This theophany is eternal.[62]

These two stages are best understood through the “metaphor of the mirror”: according to Ibn ‘Arabī, “creation” occurred when “the Divine Being”, or the Absolute existence (i.e. God), “contemplated Himself” in the “mirror of non-being” (*fī mirāat al‘adam al-muṭlaq*), as the Šayḫ says:

> The absolute non-being constitutes a mirror (*marāa*) for the Absolute-Existence [i.e. God] in which He contemplates His Image… and from this image He “knew” His world [i.e. our “phenomenal world”] from eternity, since theophanies are eternal.[63]

The gaze of God in the mirror of non-being brought about the world. This [phenomenal] world is nothing but God’s image. As such, it is not He. For, analogous

[61] I put the parenthesis because, creation is inexact word, the exact word is manifestations
[62] see also Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Ṣūfism of Ibn ‘Arabī*, 231. See also, Binyamin Abrahamov (2015): *Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. An Annotated Translation of “The Bezels of Wisdom”. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York, 17.
[63] Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt.* Dār al-fikr, V, 89; Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, III, 47.

to one's image in the mirror, which is never identical to the person whose image it is, God's image is also non-identical to Him. Nonetheless, it is not a mere illusion, since it is God's image, and how is it possible for something related to God to be illusory? God's contemplation in the mirror marks the first stage of theophany, which results in his bringing about His world - stage 2. These stages will be elaborated upon in a moment:

§ 2.1.1 The Sacrosanct Effusion/ Holy Overflow (*Fayḍ Aqdas*)

As already stated, the reason why God gazed into that mirror (of absolute non-existence), and as a result this world was brought about, is that *He wanted to know Himself differently*, or to know Himself in a different way, or via a different image. This, as already argued, is conveyed through the holy saying (*Ḥadīṯ Qudsi*): "I was a hidden treasure, then I desired to be known so I created the world that I might be known", which is, using Michael Ebstein's depiction, a *Mythical discourse.*

Mythically speaking, the Divine Names aspired to be actualized. For insofar as they are within God's knowledge, they have no meaning or influence – they are *impotent.*[64] As a result they yearned for an actualization of their meanings or realities, or ideal images. Insofar as those realities are not actualized, the Divine Names have no influence in the world. Therefore, they aspire to manifest themselves in action, in this world.[65] The ideal images that the Divine Names aspire to realize, are also called the fixed or immutable entities (*a'yān ṯābita*).

Immutable or fixed entities (*a'ayān ṯābita*)

The fixed entities are the forms or the images or the realties of the Divine Names; the perfect potentials that they aspire to realize. In addition, since they are the result of the Absolute Existence's gaze into the mirror of non-existence, which is infinite, they are

[64] See Michael Ebstein (2018): "In Truth You are the Polytheist!": Mythic Elements in Ibn al-'Arabī's Teachings on the Divine Names". In: *Intellectual History of The Islamicate World*, Vol 6, Issue 3. Brill, NV, Leiden, 365.
[65] See Gerald Elmore (2001): "Four Texts of Ibn al-'Arabī on the Creative self-Manifestation of the Divine Names". In: *The Journal Of the Muhiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*, Vol XXIX, 25-26. See also, Ibn al-'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, I, 100; Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, I, 289.

also infinite. It is as if they fill the infinite void of the mirror, and so like the void, they are infinite too. Like all things other than God, these fixed entities have none of the real existence that is had by God. They are just a reflection in a mirror. Their existence is an *acquisition* (*Iktisāb*) by God. They are nothing but loci of His manifestation, or paradigms to which his various manifestations aspire.[66]

Ibn al ʻArabī aims to reject a central philosophical doctrine in the Islamic tradition, namely, the doctrine of creation *ex-nihilo*, endorsed by al-Ghazālī for instance.[67] For Ibn ʻArabī, non-existence is incoherent, and thus, things cannot be brought about from nothing. As a result, they "were given existence" differently. The creation for Ibn ʻArabī was brought about, not from nothing, but from those fixed entities that are nothing but the loci of God's manifestation. To put it in other words, it is as if the creation was transferred from one state to another, strictly speaking, from a hidden or a latent (*Bāṭin*) state which replaces, so to speak, non-existence, to their manifest (Ẓāhir) state. This manifest state *cancelled* their hidden state, which is analogical to non-existence; that is, it is as if it *cancelled* non-existence. So, instead of something from nothing, we have manifest from latent. As the Šayḫ points out:

> Nothing was created from a nonexistence whose *wujūd* is impossible. On the contrary, things became manifest in fixed entities. This is our words at the beginning of this book "praise belongs to God, who brought the entities into existence from a nonexistence and from its nonexistence [*al ḥamdu lilāhī aladhī awjada al-ashyā'a 'an 'adamen wa 'adamahu*]".[68]

Those who adhere to the *ex-nihilo* doctrine could still claim that this depiction of "creation" by Ibn ʻArabī, in the cited passage, is congruent with their doctrine. After all, it's not as if Ibn ʻArabī adopts a vision of creation *ex-materia* (i.e. out of matter). But matters change when we focus in on Ibn ʻArabī's "creation" in more detail. That is to say, as I will demonstrate in a moment, Ibn ʻArabī *does* and does not endorse creation *ex-nihilo*.

[66] See William Chittick, *The Self- Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabī's Cosmology*, 29; Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, II, 57; Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, III, 101.
[67] See, Oliver Leaman, *An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy*, 44.
[68] William Chittick, *The Self- Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabī's Cosmology*, 30; Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, II, 310; Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, III, 567.

To begin with, the doctrine of *ex-nihilo*, in its most Orthodox form, argues that God created the world at some point in time from nothing. This view is contrasted with the doctrine of eternal creation which claims that the world has existed from eternity alongside God, its eternal creator. However, there were some endeavours to argue that even eternal creation can be depicted as *ex nihilo.*

Such an endeavour was made by the medieval Jewish Philosopher and Halakhist, Ḥasdai Crescas. In Part 1 of his treatise, *Light of the Lord*, Crescas argues that creation *ex nihilo* is possible even if it has no beginning in time, i.e. even if it is eternal. Crescas contends that, creating "something from nothing" does not designate a time at which creation occurred. i.e. time is irrelevant in this debate. All that matters, is that God didn't create the world *out of something*. Creation is creation *ex nihilo* so long as all things depend upon God. That is to say that, either *creation in time*, or *eternity*, is *ex* nihilo, so long as it all depends on nothing other than God.[69]

In accordance with this, both creation in time and eternal creation subscribe to the God's creating "something from nothing", i.e. creation *ex nihilo*.[70] In which cases, it turns out that creation *ex nihilo* is, as Seymour Feldman points out, "identical with the proof of God's being the first cause of everything".[71]

On Crescas's understanding, it would seem that, Ibn 'Arabī's process of "creation" should actually count as creation *ex nihilo*. Since it follows from Crescas that even eternal creation, or God's eternally bringing things from one state (latent) to another (manifest), allows for the description "creation *ex nihilo*"; so long as God is the cause of everything (both the latent and the manifest).

However, I contend that this conception of *ex nihilo* does not, completely, correspond with Ibn 'Arabī's. Put differently, this constitutes half of the truth concerning Ibn 'Arabī. The second half of the truth entails that Ibn 'Arabī does not endorse creation *ex-nihilo*. This owes to the fact that, given the metaphor of the mirror, and what I will explain later, according to Ibn 'Arabī, nothing really exists in

[69] Ḥasdai Crescas (2018): *Light of the Lord*. Translated with Introduction and notes by Roslyn Weiss. Oxford University Press, 272. See also Seymour Feldman (2003): *Philosophy in a Time of Crisis*: *Don Isaac Abravanel, Defender of the faith.* Routledge Curzon Jewish Studies Series, 24.
[70] The Latin appellation for the creation ex nihilo from eternity, or the eternal creation with no beginning in time is creatio continua ex nihilo. For more on these concepts see James T. Bretzke (1998): *Consecrated Phrases: A Latin Theological Dictionary*: *Latin Expressions Commonly Found In Theological Writings.* Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 46-47.
[71] Seymour Feldman, *Philosophy in a Time of Crisis*, 24

the strictest sense of the word. Existence, for everything other than God – i.e. the actualization of the fixed entities mentioned above – resembles a line that separates the shadow from the sun, which *does* and *doesn't* exist. Having been brought about in the mirror of non-existence, which is not an entity, the fixed entities themselves, which are the loci of God's manifestation, are not really real. Yet, they have *gained* or *acquired* (*iktasabat*) *existence* by God, who is the Absolute existence; thus, they *do* exist.[72] In brief, Ibn 'Arabī endorses a contradiction. He does so knowingly as he holds that beings other than God both do and do not exist. Accordingly, so long as you focus on the notion that fixed entities *do* exist, then you end up with a doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, as defined by Crescas; but if you focus on their non-existence, then you cannot speak of creation at all, needless to say of creation *ex nihilo*. In brief, Crescas's conception of creation *ex* nihilo constitutes a half-true description of Ibn 'Arabī's view, i.e. the view that he *does* embrace creation *ex-nihilo*. However, it does not correspond completely with his depiction of the process of "creation", according to which creation *ex-nihilo* shall be ruled out. Now back to the fixed entities, and their contradictory state of being.

The Isthmus – *Barzaḫ*

What makes the fixed entities existent and non-existent is the fact that they *meet* (*tuqābil*) absolute existence (God) and non-existence in themselves.[73] As Bashier points out:

> The fixed entity is a non-existent [*thing*] since it *meets* [my italic] non-existence in itself, and it is not a non-existent [*thing*] since it *meets* [my italic] the Absolute Existence in itself.[74]

According to Ibn 'Arabī, the *barzaḫ*, or the Isthmus is a liminal *object*[75] which separates between two other objects, in the sense that it distinguishes and

[72] The verbs gained and acquired are better translations for *iktasaba* than derived. Since, to acquire or to gain is to be in a passive state. And this corresponds with arguing that those fixed entities are passive, and not active. Thus, they acquire or gain their existence from God.
[73] The sense of meet shall not be understood literally, for this is not a regular meeting that requires the existence of the meeting things. Rather, it should be grasped metaphorically, since those fixed entities, as I will argue in a moment, are of a barzaḫī nature -they do and do not exist.
[74]Salman Bashier (2017): *Nāfiḍa 'alā al-ghayb bayna Ibn al-'Arabī wa Ibn Rushd fī al-khayāl w-al-itiṣāl w ma'rifat al-nafs*. Al-Kamel Verlag, Freiburg, Germany, 269.
[75] This is not a sensible object as will be explicated latter.

differentiates between them, and *makes* it evident that they do not meet and get mixed, as the Šayḫ says:

> Know that the *Barzaḫ* is a liminal thing [*amr fāṣil*] which separates between two things… similar to the separating line between the shadow and the sun, and to [i.e. similar to] God's saying: "the two seas meeting [side by side], between them a *Barzaḫ* they do not overpass" (55:19). And the meaning of *do not overpass* is that they are not mixed together.[76]

The line that constitutes an isthmus between the shadow and the sun, differentiates between them and *ascertains* that they do not transgress or overpass and become merged and unified. In itself, this line is not sensible but rather intelligible; resembling the *Barzaḫ* between the two seas: "the senses are unable to separate between them [i.e. between the two seas] and the intellect judges that there is an isthmus between them".[77]

The reason why it is intelligible and not sensible is that being a sensible object would call for an infinite regress. That is because: were it a sensible thing, then it would not be an isthmus, since a sensible thing has at least two dimensions; which means that it can be divided, and consequently, this would call for another *barzaḫ*. Thus, the original *barzaḫ will* not *meet* each of the two things that it separates. Or, more accurately, it *will* meet each of them but with a different face. And then you would need another *barzaḫ* to separate between these two faces. For instance, the wall which separates between two adjacent rooms cannot be a *barzaḫ* since it meets each one of these rooms with a different face. Accordingly, another isthmus is needed in order to separate between the wall's two faces, and if this *barzaḫ* is sensible, then we would face the same problem again and again *ad infinitum*.[78] Briefly, in order for a thing to be called a *barzaḫ*, it should *meet* each of the two things that it separates between, with the same face that it *meets* the other, as the Šayḫ says:

> If there is no such *barzakh,* then the face with which it meets one of the two affairs between which it stands is identical with the face with which it meets

[76] Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, I, 304; Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, I, 680.
[77] Ibid.
[78] See William Chittick, *The Self- Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-ʻArabī's Cosmology*, 335. See also, Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, III, 518; Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, VI, 400.

the other. This is the true *barzakh*. It is, through its own essence, identical with everything it meets.[79]

The *Barzaḫ*, is an intermediate isthmus that distinguishes between two entities. Indeed, having no faces, due to its very "tenuous existence*"*, it faces each of the entities in itself, which means that its identity is inextricably bound up with those things it separates. Consequently, it is *identical* to each of the two entities it *meets*.[80] As such, it cannot be sensible, for if it were, we would wind up with an infinite regress. Since a sensible thing, as Bashier points out "can be divided necessarily, which would mean that it [i.e. the *barzaḫ*] becomes, similar to these things it distinguishes between, [that is] in need of another *barzaḫ* ... and so on."[81]

Having explained this concept, now it becomes easier to understand how the fixed entities function as *barzaḫ*:

The fixed entities stand at the threshold of existence and non-existence. This gives rise to a central contradiction. On the one hand, they *meet* Non-existence in itself, and as such they are in some sense, *identical* to the non-existent. On the other hand, they also *meet* Absolute existence in itself and, thusly, they are existent. They are both existent and non-existent.

The fixed entities function as a *barzaḫ* between non-existence and Absolute Existence (i.e. God). This explains why they are not sensible, but rather intelligible. For if they were sensible, they would have extension, and this would issue in an infinite regress, as more and more isthmuses (*barāziḫ*) will be needed. The *barāziḫ's* existence, tersely put, is similar to the existence of the isthmus that separates between the two seas, and that separates between the shadow and the sun. The notions of fixed entities and *barāziḫ*, can be called *dialetheia:*

[79] Ibid.
[80] It is worth mentioning that this identity between the *barzaḫ* and the things it separates between, is not transitive which might indicate that these things are identical. In classical logic, An identity is transitive, if given three objects – A, B and C – then, if A=B and B=C then A=C. The *barzaḫ*, however, is an inconsistent object – an object that gives rise to contradictions – and identity is not transitive between inconsistent objects in paraconsistent logic, as will be referred to later.
[81] Salman Bashier, *Nāfiḍa 'alā al-ghayb bayna Ibn al-'Arabī wa Ibn Rushd fī al-khayāl w-al-itiṣāl w ma'rifat al-nafs*, 235.

Dialetheism is the view that some contradictions are true, i.e. that some truth bearers or propositions are both true and false.[82] A *dialetheium* is a true contradiction. It is a truth bearer or a proposition *P*, such that both *P* and its negation, ¬ *P*, are true.[83]

As argued above, the fixed entity is both existent and non-existent, as such the proposition that asserts its existence is a *dialetheium*. Likewise, propositions asserting the existence of any sort of *barzaḫ* are all *dialetheia* – since all *barāziḫs* exist and also fail to exist. In brief, the fixed entities and the *barāziḫs*, are inconsistent objects; i.e. objects that give rise to instances of the formula: (P ∧ ¬ P).

The nature of these *dialetheia*-generating entities, namely, the fixed entities and the *barāziḫ*, seem to threaten the Law of Non-Contradiction (LNC), which tells us that, for any proposition P: ¬ (P ∧ ¬ P). That said, our *dialetheia do* not reject LNC; they rather presuppose that the law itself is both logically true *and* false.[84]

I will postpone discussion of the objections to dialetheism, and the replies to them until the last chapter. All we need to note at this point is that Ibn -'Arabī's conception of the fixed entities, and his notion of a *barzaḫ* seem to commit him to dialetheism.

Al- '*Amāa'* – the Primordial Cloud

The place that contains the fixed entities and where the holy overflow occurs, is called *al-'Amāa'* (the Primordial Cloud). It is so called, since it is presented as the breath that God exhales when He reveals to His Names their potentials, i.e., their fixed entities. And it is called a breath, since it expresses God's love for His Names. It is similar in some sense to a sigh, which in general designates the relief that is expressed when a lover encounters his/her beloved. Through His breath, God relieves the

[82] See Bradley Armour Garb (2004): "Diagnosing Dialetheism". In: *The Law of Non-Contradiction: New Philosophical Essays*. Edited by, Graham Priest, JC Beall, And Bradley Armour-Garb. Calrendon Press, Oxford University, 114.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.

constriction of the fixed entities. That is to say that they, similar to everything else, were manifested in that Cloud.[85]

The breath is something like the entire expanse of a logical space in which all potentials eventually become manifest. Once again, Ibn ʻArabī's dialetheism comes to the fore. The breath is identical with the breath of the All-merciful – part of God's very essence, and yet, it is also one of the existents that God has brought about, thus, it is not identical with God. It is the *barzaḫ* between the latent and the manifest. Accordingly, the cloud has the property of two opposites: manifest and non-manifest (*ẓāhir wa bāṭin*); it is an inconsistent *object*; an object that generates a *dialetheium*.

This Cloud is also the result of the *Sacred Overflow* (*Fayḍ Muqadas*), since as we have seen, through the breath of the Al-merciful, everything becomes manifest – as the fixed entities become actualized. The Divine breath, therefore, initiates the second stage of "creation", i.e. the process of actualizing the "contents" of the Divine Names – their fixed realities or entities. It is the *barzaḫ* between the two stages of creation. Moreover, this Cloud is conceived also as the unconditioned imagination (*ḫayāl Muṭlaq*), where all things are imagined, and as a *realized* Imagination (*ḫayāl muḥaqaq*), the place in which the imagined becomes real.

§ 2.1.2 Hieratic/ Heirophanic Effusion/ Sacred Overflow (*Fayḍ Muqadas*)

Imagination:

In the second stage of "creation", the cloud is conceived as a *realized Imagination* (*ḫayāl muḥaqaq*), the place in which the imagined becomes real.[86] Another appellation is given to this imagination, namely, "absolute imagination", since it receives every form that there is and in it everything is actualized. This is because of its all embracingness (*itisāʻaihi*), as the Šayḫ says: "…in it, every creature was manifested… and the absolute imagination is also the cloud".[87] It is also called

[85] See William Chittick (1989): *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-ʻArabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*. State University of New York Press, 134. See also, Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, II, 313; Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, III, 572.

[86] See William Chittick, *The Self- Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-ʻArabī's Cosmology*, 337. See also Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, II, 310; Ibn ʻArabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, III, 566.
[87] Ibid.

"actualized" or existentiated, since *being* is existentiated in this Primordial Cloud, or imagination. For as soon as something is *imagined* in that Cloud, it must also be given existence; it must be actualized, since non-being is, according to Ibn 'Arabī, incoherent.

In this cloud, all things are transferred from their concealed or hidden state, to their manifest state, which is, as argued so far, the second stage of the whole process. Thus, the primordial Cloud is, as Henry Corbin observes, "active and passive, receptive and actualizing (*muḥaqqiq*)".[88] Tersely, it can be said that the process of "creation" in Ibn 'Arabī, is the outcome of God's "imagining the world into being".

This *imagining of the world by God*, is similar somehow to that of the *Hassidic* Master Rabbi Mordechai Yosef of Izhibitza who argues that the "world is like God's dream".[89] God, according to the Izhibitza, sustains human life: "only from what comes out of His mouth [i.e. God's mouth] does man live".[90] This motif, i.e. the sustenance of the world by God, could be construed primarily, in two ways: either God sustains His creation intermittently, or He sustains it continuously. As Samuel Lebens points out:

> This doctrine [that God sustains the world] could be framed in either a weak or a strong formulation. The weak formulation argues that God sustains the world intermittently, like a person providing food for a helpless youngster. The strong formulation argues that God continuously sustains, like a person conjuring up a mental image of a flower. The image of the flower continues to exist only as the thinker continues to pay attention to it.[91]

The strong sustenance that Lebens describes, tightly corresponds with Ibn al-'Arabī's God. Since the God who "imagines the world into being", is "your food in existence".[92] The sort of sustenance that God gives to the world is like the sustenance

[88] Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Ṣūfism of Ibn 'Arabī*, 220.
[89] See Rabbi Mordechai Yosef Leiner (2001): *Living Waters, The Mei HaShiloach*: *A commentary on the Torah*. Translated and edited by, Betsalel Philip Edwards. Jason Aronson Book, 92.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Samuel Lebens (2014): "God and His Imaginary Friends: a Hassidic metaphysics". In: *Religious Studies,* Cambridge University Press, 184.
[92] Ibn 'Arabī (1966): *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, Beirut, 83. See also Binyamin Abrahamov, *Ibn al- 'Arabīs Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, 53. Abrahamov translates this as "He supplies you with existence", yet I think that the word food shall be maintained as it delivers the motif in a more powerful way.

of a mind to the ideas it conjures. This is a strong sustenance, since God is your essence (as we are among God's manifestations) and without this essence, which is called here food, we couldn't exist.

Nevertheless, despite this affinity between these two masters (i.e. Ibn 'Arabī and the Izhibitza), there still a difference between them. As argued already, things in Ibn 'Arabī *exist* and do *not* exist. And insofar as you argue that they *do* exist – which results from the transmission from latency to appearance – a depiction that might qualify as creation *ex nihilo*, following Crescas; then you might wind up saying that there is no difference between the Izhibitza and Ibn 'Arabī. However, if you focus on the second conjunct, that things don't exist, then there is no place for creation, neither *ex nihilo* nor in any other sense, nor is there even room for the sustenance of things – things do not exist.

It is worth noting that what enables us, according to the Šayḫ, to conceive that we are among God's manifestations, is the power of the Active Imagination (*quwwat al-ḫayāl*) that we have within us, which is also one of God's manifestations:

> And without the power of the imagination (*quwwat al-ḫayāl*) nothing would be manifested from that which we have made manifest, for it is the most powerful and perfect among entities, and it accepts spiritual forms, and it is through which creation takes place in many forms.[93]

This active imagination is also named the "attached imagination", (*al-ḫayāl al-mutaṣel*), since it is conjoined to the imagining subject,[94] and enables him to conceive that this world is an imagined image. Via this imagination, i.e. our active imagination, we can perceive God's manifestations. These manifestations or theophanies cannot be known, neither by our senses nor by our intellect, but only through our Active imagination. Moreover, according to Ibn 'Arabī, this Active imagination enables us to understand the meaning of death, as it reveals to us that when we will die, we will be aware that we were in a sleep.[95] Furthermore, and more importantly, it enables us to understand that this world is a product of imagination too. Which is nothing other than the eternal manifestations of God's Names that are brought about in each

[93] Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, II, 31; Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, III, 567.
[94] See Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Ṣūfism of Ibn 'Arabī*, 258.
[95]See Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, II, 313; Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, III, 571.

moment. Hence, through our Active imagination we know that every external thing is also an imagination [God's Imagination]. That is to say, our imagination allows us to conceive of God as "imagining the world into being". And only because of our power of imagination can we make cognitive contact with this imaginary world.

To sum up: the whole process of "creation", which is the self-disclosure of God, consists of two stages: the first stage (1) which is the Holy Overflow, occurs when the Divine Being, i.e. God, reveals to His Names their fixed entities (i.e., the potentials). The second stage (2), which is called the Sacred Overflow, is the actualization of those fixed entities in a phenomenal world. The product of God's gaze in the mirror of non-existence, is called, the 'primordial Cloud', 'Absolute Imagination', 'Realized imagination' or simply 'Imagination'. And what enables us to conceive that this is all an Imagination, is the imagination at our disposal, so that everything after all, is imagination within imagination, *taḫayul fī taḫayul.*

§ 2.1.3 The simultaneous occurrence of the stages

It is worth mentioning that these two stages occur simultaneously, i.e., that the first stage where the fixed entities are revealed, does not chronologically precede the second stage, where these entities are given existence.

Ibn 'Arabī uses the lightening metaphor, in order to convey this simultaneity,[96] and connects this metaphor with the Qur'ān's (54:50): "and our command is but one, like a glance of the eye [*wma amruna ilā waḥida ka lamaḥin bil-baṣar*]".[97] The moment that the lightening occurs signifies the occurrence of the Holy Overflow (*Fayḍ Aqdas*), wherein the Divine lights up the realities of the fixed entities. This moment is also the same moment the air becomes colored, which signifies the second stage, i.e. the Sacred Overflow (*Fayḍ Muqadas*). For this colorization of the air designates the actualization of the fixed entities – the manifestation of the sensory things. It is also the same moment the eyes (our eyes) perceive it and connect to it, i.e. the moment they perceive those sensory things, and God's manifestations. In all this, the time is one, that is, they occur at the same time even though you know that they

[96] See William Chittick, *The Self- Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabī's Cosmology*, 90. See also Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, I, 703; Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, II, 601.
[97] Ibid. See also Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, II, 600.

occur through an order; but that order is logical rather than chronological. The moment of the eyes' perception signifies the climax of this whole metaphor. That is, it signifies the goal of the process of self-disclosure of God, which is, perceiving through humans' power of imagination, this self-disclosure of God. This metaphor reveals to us the rank of creatures, which is nothing but a shadow: the sensory things are a shadow of the fixed entities, who are in turn a shadow of the Divine Essence. Thus, everything other than God is a shadow. To understand this deeper, I will return to the metaphor of the mirror.

§ 2.1.4 The shadow of God: The Supreme *Barzaḫ*

As I have already stated, according to Ibn 'Arabī, God "contemplated Himself in the mirror of non-existence" and consequently the world was *created*, or God's manifestations were brought about. Yet, this *creation* is a contemplation in the mirror of non-being. And that is why Ibn 'Arabī calls these manifestations – Imagination. Ibn 'Arabī states clearly that this imagination, or God's manifestations, are a "shadow.[98]

Ibn 'Arabī argues that, everything other that the Absolute existence, is prone to vanish. That is, each and every manifestation of God is finite and will be replaced by another manifestation (recall the renewal of creation). This occurs eternally from the very moment of bringing about the world through the contemplation of God in the mirror of non-being. Thus, God's essence stays inaccessible and unreachable, since it is infinite, for the manifestations of God are infinite, and a finite being cannot grasp and conceive of this infinity of the essence of the Real. Accordingly, God's essence is the only real thing, and everything other than It is in the world of imagination, which is nothing but a shadow of that essence.

The non-existence, in this metaphor, is decisive in order to understand that God is an Absolute existence and not a limited existence: "The Absolute non-existence is what has *granted* (*a'aṭa*) [my italic] existence to the Absolute existence, and it is what has *allowed* [my italic] God's self-disclosure through His gaze in it [i.e.

[98] See William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, 118. See also, Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, II, 313; Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, III, 571-572.

in that mirror]."[99] Given that, so to speak, we cannot think of an absolute-existence without thinking of its negation, namely, absolute non-existence; then, it is as if the absolute non-existence grants the absolute existence its own existence. Moreover, being the place where God manifests Himself, it is as if the absolute non-existence *gives* God His existence. The result is that God's existence is restricted: since it is an existence vis-à-vis non-existence. Therefore, the existence which is manifested in the mirror of non-existence, is not the Absolute existence itself, but rather a restricted existence which is his shadow or Imagination.

What allows us to distinguish and acknowledge that we stand in front of two opposites, namely, between Absolute existence and absolute non-existence is the shadow. As a result, this shadow which is also the very same Imagination, is also a *barzaḫ*, since it separates between Absolute-existence and absolute non-existence. It is within this shadow that we creatures live. And since it is restricted (as it is a shadow), it is a restricted existence from the face it *meets* Absolute existence, and a restricted non-existence, from the face it *meets* absolute non-existence.

This limited existence (i.e. God's shadow), which is also a *barzaḫ*, Ibn 'Arabī calls "the Supreme, or the highest *Barzaḫ* (*Barzaḫ al-barāziḫ*)."[100] This Supreme *Barzaḫ meets* the Absolute Existence and non-existence in their essences. i.e. it has a face towards existence, and a face towards non-existence (the very same face, for fear of regress). Similar to other *barāziḫs* it is also an intelligible limit (isthmus). What explains its intelligibility is that since Absolute non-existence has no *substantiality*, this resulting limit (i.e. the Supreme *Barzaḫ*) has no substantiality or existence: "Since the absolute non-existence cannot be given existence and has no entification (*laysa lahu wuǧūd 'aynī*), the resulting limit is not an existing limit, but rather, an intelligible limit."[101]

This Supreme *Barzaḫ* is an illusionary limit. It hasn't really given the Absolute existence its existence, for He exists *a se*, but rather, it has given Him a form in which

[99] Salman Bashier, *Nāfiḍa 'alā al-ghayb bayna Ibn al-'Arabī wa Ibn Rushd fī al-khayāl w-al-itiṣāl w ma'rifat al-nafs*, 267.
[100] See William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, 204. See also, Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, III, 46; Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, V, 87.
[101] Salman Bashier, *Nāfiḍa 'alā al-ghayb bayna Ibn al-'Arabī wa Ibn Rushd fī al-khayāl w-al-itiṣāl w ma'rifat al-nafs*, 268.

He can know Himself (which is the phenomenal world): "Its illusion lies in its not giving the Absolute existence its existence, but in its giving Him a form of intelligibility, in the sense that it *allowed* him to know Himself".[102] That said, there is a sense in which the Supreme *Barzaḫ* is not a mere illusion. Indeed, the fact that it is God's own image entails that it is not a mere illusion. Once again, Ibn 'Arabī's dialetheism comes to the fore. The Supreme *Barzaḫ* is both an illusion and reality, it is: He – God, and, not He at the same time – He/ not He, (*huwa la huwa*). As Ibn 'Arabī says:

> It was said to Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz, "Through what have you known your God?" He replied, "Through the fact that He brings opposites together". So every entity qualified by existence is it/not it. The whole cosmos is He/Not He.[103]

This whole cosmos is the He/ Not He. Ibn 'Arabī cites al-Ḫarrāz, whom he considers to be one of the greatest Sufis, and "people of the path (*ahl al-ṭarīq*)",[104] in order to stress that this kind of knowledge, i.e. knowing that God "brings opposites together" is limited to the Sufis or Gnostics and saints.[105] The masses, including philosophers and Kalāmists, know only either side of this formula: i.e. that the world is either God or not God, and they are unqualified to cognize the whole truth.[106] In addition, the Supreme *Barzaḫ* is also a self-contradictory object, or an inconsistent object. It gives rise to *dialetheium* that satisfies the formula ($A \wedge \neg A$). The Supreme *Barzaḫ* is the absolute existence and the absolute *non*-existence, and it is also not the absolute existence, nor is it the absolute non-existence. Put in other words, the Supreme *Barzaḫ*, which is the phenomenal world, *exists* and does not exist.

Following this whole discussion, if God's essence is the only real existent as it can be inferred from the metaphor of the mirror, and His manifestations are His "shadow" or the Supreme *Barzaḫ*; which is both the Absolute existence and non-

[102] Ibid.
[103] William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, 116. See also Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, II, 379; Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, IV, 12.
[104] See William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, 243. See also Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, II, 605; Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār al-Fikr, IV, 442.
[105] Or the Perfect Man- "al-Insān al-Kāmil", this thesis will not delve into this fundamental motif in Ibn 'Arabī, for this will fall beyond its scope.
[106] See William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, 243.

existence, or *neither* Absolute existence *nor* Absolute non-existence; then this being (i.e. the whole cosmos) is nothing other than God. That is to say, there is nothing in existence but God. Put differently: if God's essence is the only real existence, and His manifestations (which are the actualization of His Names) express His essence, then there is nothing in being which is not intimately related to God. Indeed, being belongs to God alone. In short, this is a *Oneness of Being* or *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. It is summarized by Ibn 'Arabī, through this sentence: "There is nothing in existence save God, His names, and His acts".[107]

[107]Ibid, 284. See also, Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, III, 68.

§ Chapter III: *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd* and Gluon theory

My aim in this chapter consists of two stages: in the first stage I will address commentators' attitudes towards the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd.* Those attitudes are divided typically into two parties: first, there are those who *do* ascribe this doctrine to the Šayḫ, and – secondly – there are those who don't. I will first address the latter before turning to the former. Among the former, we can find three different interpretations, which as I will attempt to demonstrate, are incompatible with *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* in Ibn 'Arabī. In the second stage I will argue that *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* can be best understood through an appeal to gluon theory.

§ 3.1 Denying *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd* in Ibn 'Arabī

One of the leading commentators of Ibn 'Arabī who argues that one cannot derive any system from the Šaykh's oeuvre, and accordingly, would find it difficult to argue for Ibn 'Arabī's commitment to *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* is William Chittick who points out:

> Once we grasp the fact that we are not dealing here with a philosophical or theological system, we can begin to appreciate the difficulty of providing even an elementary understanding of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd.*[108]

Chittick argues that since its quite difficult to derive a philosophical or a theological *system* from Ibn al-'Arabī's oeuvre, deriving a doctrine, then, such as that of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, might also fail. Nevertheless, thought it might be too difficult to glean a system from Ibn 'Arabī's writings, this does not entail that commitment to a doctrine cannot be established. That "no *system* can be found" doesn't entail that "no *doctrine* can be found".

Chittick, on top of that, argues that the term *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* cannot provide a final description of reality, since Ibn 'Arabī also describes the world as God/–not God or He/–not He.[109] Chittick understands this description to presuppose that there is something more to the world than God, since the world is both God, and also 'not God'. But, in my view, Chittick is wrong to think that this description somehow

[108] William Chittick, *In Search of the lost heart: explanations in Islamic thought*, 74.
[109] Ibid, 76.

undermines *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* or that it does not give us a doctrine. To make this clear, I return to the metaphor of the mirror.

As I have argued in the previous chapter, the image which results from this mirror, i.e. the phenomenal world, is a collection of God's theophanies, according to Ibn 'Arabī. Consequently, there is nothing in existence but God and His theophanies. Constituting an image, those theophanies or manifestations do not have as real an existence as the Real (i.e. God), meaning thereby, that we are facing an explicit unity of existence that involves nothing but God and His reflection (which is ontologically dependent upon Him). Accordingly, the "He/ Not He" formula is consistent with his depiction of the world in terms of the fundamental *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd* – in contradistinction to Chittick's claim. The only fundamental reality is God, since the "Not He" part of the formula *depends* upon God. It is His reflection.

§ 3.2 Accepting *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd* in Ibn 'Arabī

As already mentioned, those who do ascribe the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* to Ibn 'Arabī, are divided into two camps. There are those who claim that the doctrine can be explained in terms of other philosophical doctrines, such as pantheism and those who think that it can't. I will address first those who think that it cannot be explained in terms of other doctrines.

Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd: Unexplained

For instance, one of the leading commentators of Ibn 'Arabī, Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd writes:

> The fact is that the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* in Ibn 'Arabī, needs to be understood in a special sense that distances it from any other approach to *Oneness of Being* either in contemporary, modern, ancient, medieval or western philosophy. And that is because, Ibn 'Arabī sets out from a strong dualism that he makes between God's essence and the world from one

> perspective, and between It [i.e. God's essence] and man from another perspective.[110]

Abū Zayd is right that Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine requires a special reconstruction; that it cannot be fully explained in terms of any western approach to the Oneness of Being. Nevertheless, he does not reveal to us, how we *are* to understand this doctrine. He attributes a 'strong dualism' to Ibn 'Arabī, yet he doesn't expound what it amounts to. How does this dualism account for *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*? Abū Zayd leaves us in a state of *aporia.*

Another eminent scholar of Ibn 'Arabī, who argues that *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, cannot be explained in terms of any other philosophical doctrine is Seyyed Hossein Nasr.[111] He holds that *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* means, rather

> That while God is absolutely transcendent with respect to the Universe, the Universe is not completely separated from Him; that the "universe is mysteriously plunged in God." It signifies that to believe in any order of reality as autonomous apart from the Absolute Reality [i.e. God] is to fall into the cardinal sin of Islam, namely, polytheism (*shirk*).[112]

Nasr is right in his insight, that despite God's transcendence with respect to the universe, the universe fails to be independent of God on Ibn 'Arabī's reckoning. Nevertheless, Nasr does not illustrate what he means by "the universe is mysteriously plunged in God." What are we supposed to understand by this assertion? Is Nasr suggesting that the universe is a proper part of God in a mereological sense? Or is Nasr saying that the universe is dependent, somehow, upon God in an ontological sense? It seems that the answer according to Nasr, is that there is no reality other than God, as he points out:

> … [to believe in any order of reality as autonomous apart from the Absolute Reality is] to deny the *Shahādah* (*lā ilāhi ila-Allāh*) – there is no divinity but

[110] Naṣr Hāmid Abū Zayd (2014): *falsafat alta'awīl: derāsa fī ta'awīl al-Qur'ān 'inda muḥī-aldīn bn 'Arabī.* Dār al-Wihda Beirut, 21.
[111] See Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1997): *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna- Suhrawardī- Ibn 'Arabī*. Caravan Books, New York, 104-106.
[112] Ibid, 106.

> the Divine – which means ultimately that there is no reality other than Absolute Reality [i.e. God].[113]

This sounds like an outright acosmism and doesn't unpack the notion of the universe being "plunged in God". Since again, in what sense is it "plunged in Him"? In a mereological sense? Or is it "within God's knowledge", as our thoughts are plunged within our minds; a view that might be interpreted as panentheism? Or is it "imagined by God" in the sense that God "imagines" the world into being; rendering the universe illusory? And if it's not real, then how can it be plunged into anything? As with Abū Zayd, Nasr leaves us in *aporia* too.[114]

§ 3.3 Several interpretations of *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd*

The second camp among those who attribute the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* to Ibn 'Arabī, attempts to explain it in terms of other – "better known" – doctrines.

§ 3.3.1 Panentheism

One reading of Ibn 'Arabī's *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* is in terms of Panentheism. Panentheism strives to achieve some middle position between theism and pantheism, as Harald Atmanspacher and Hartmut von Sass point out:

> Panentheism oscillates between the idea that God *is* nature itself (pantheism) and the idea that God is ontologically *different* from nature (theism), that is between an identification of God with His creation and an "ontological difference" where God is a real counterpart to His creation.[115]

The panentheist suggests that God is the cause of everything who in some sense encompasses everything, and is yet, at the same time non-identical with the creation he causes and encompasses. This leaves the exact nature of the relation between God

[113] Ibid.
[114] Another scholar who also thinks that Ibn 'Arabī's *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd*, cannot be reduced to other doctrines is Henry Corbin. See, Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in The Ṣūfism Of Ibn 'Arabī*, 18; 116.
[115] Harald Atmanspacher and Hartmut von Sass (2017): "The Many Faces of Panentheism". In: *Zygon.* Vol, 52, Issue 4. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1030.

and the world somewhat mysterious.[116] To address this mystery, we need to unearth the "en" in panentheism. Atmanspacher and Sass, give a list of possible disambiguations of panentheism borrowed from John Culp.[117] They enumerate four varieties of panentheism[118]. I summarize:

1- *spatial or local*: panentheism entails a localization of literally everything, insofar as everything is in God and God serves as something like a spatial container.
2- *Mereological panentheism*: everything is a part of God, and all parts together either constitute God (which is close to *pantheism* again) or constitute merely a proper part of God, leaving some of God – so to speak – to transcend the creation entirely.
3- *Metaphysical panentheism*: the "en" in panentheism might mean that God is the essence or the nucleus of everything. This can also amount to nothing more than a *causal* claim: God is the cause of everything, or to a *transcendental* version of the claim: God is the condition of the possibility of everything.
4- *Metaphorical* or *analogical panentheism*: on this account, panentheism is a metaphor that renders the world God's body, and Godself as the soul (or the mind) of the world. The claim would be that this metaphor constitutes the best description we can muster of the true underlying relationship between God and the world.

The first variety can be rejected immediately as a candidate for Ibn 'Arabī. It presupposes that God is somehow spatial. This is incompatible with Ibn 'Arabī's God who is unlimited and cannot be understood in terms of spatial or any other categories. As Ibn 'Arabī says: "I am (God) the Great and the Transcendent, no limit can limit me, and no one can know me."[119]

We can also discount the *Mereological* variety, since there is no whole-part distinction to be drawn from Ibn 'Arabī's theology. God is simple, and everything is

[116] Ibid.
[117] John Culp (2017): "Panentheism". In: *the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. Edited by Edward N. Zalta.
[118] Harald Atmanspacher and Hartmut von Sass, "The Many Faces of Panentheism", 1031.
[119] Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, Vol I, 51; Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt.* Dār al-fikr, Vol I, 201.

His manifestation. The *multiplicity* is nothing other than God's own- self reflected in the mirror of non-being. Briefly put, there is no real multiplicity here.

The third variety is too coarse-grained to be of much use. That is, unlike the first two varieties which don't fit Ibn 'Arabī, this variety doesn't do much work in explaining *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. While it maintains that the "en" in panentheism, implies that God is the essence and cause of everything, and that those beings who come into existence continue to exist due to the presence of God; it does not say very much about the relationship between God and those beings. If this vague and general claim is all that panentheism amounts to, then most theists could subscribe to it. It tells us very little. It certainly echoes Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, in the sense that God is the cause of everything, and everything is God's manifestation: "glory be to God who created things, being Himself their essences".[120] Notwithstanding, with this variety, we are lacking a more exact depiction of the nature of this causality and this notion of *manifestation*. We haven't arrived at any clarification of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*.

The fourth variety of panentheism might sound like the most compelling fit for an explanation of the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. However, as I will demonstrate momentarily, this is not the case. This variety of panentheism makes an analogy between God and the world on the one hand, and between the mind and the body on the other hand. The analogy is, however, limited. First, the claim that our mind is contained within our bodies is quite controversial, as it is denied by several philosophers, such as Descartes, Spinoza and others. Second, one important difference between the world-God relationship and the mind-body relationship is that, where our minds are wholly contained within our bodies (located nowhere beyond the limits of our body), God's mind is not just distinct, ontologically, from the world, but – for the panentheist, God goes beyond the world.[121]

The metaphor of body and soul captures something of God's immanence. But God's *transcendence* over the world, requires that God goes beyond the world; that

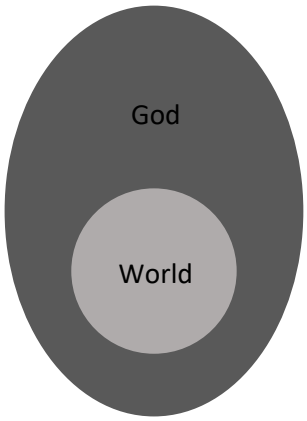
[120] See A.E. 'Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhid Din Ibnul Arabi*, 21. It is worth mentioning that the mind-body relationship is quite controversial. Among other things, the claim that the mind is contained within our bodies is denied by several philosophers

[121] See Mikael Stenmark (2019): "Panentheism and its neighbors". In: *International Journal for Philosophy of* Religion. Vol 85, Issue 1,27.

this particular mind extends beyond the borders of any body. as Mikael Stenmark points out:

> In other words, for panentheists, the *transcendence* of God is expressed through the doctrine of ontological inclusion and the *immanence* of God is captured in the doctrine of ontological symmetrical dependence.[122]

That is, the world (body) is included in God, whose mind is beyond or outside that body (world). See the illustration below.



This interdependence or the inter-relatedness between God and the world, is to be conceived not only in a metaphorical sense, but also in a metaphysical sense.[123] It designates that, not only without God is there no world, but also that without the world there is no God.[124] Meena Sharif-Funk and William Rory Dickson, seem to appropriate this interrelatedness invoked by this variety, in their reading of Ibn 'Arabī's *Waḥdat al-Wuğūd*. They interpret the *Ḥadiṯ Qudsī* (divine saying) "I was a hidden Treasure, then I desired to be known so I created the world that I might be known", which is ubiquitous in Ibn 'Arabī's writings, as indicating that the world needs God and the converse. As they point out:

> Unity requires duality in order that Unity may be known. God needs creation if he is to be God, just as creation needs God if it is to be created...Ibn al-

[122] Ibid.
[123] See Georg Gasser (2019): "God's omnipresence in the world: on possible meanings of 'en' in panentheism". In: *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*. Vol 85, Issue 1, 44.
[124] See Mikael Stenmark, "Panentheism and its neighbors", 27.

> ‘Arabi…expounded that God’s Unity, not His Absoluteness...is dependent on the temporal duality of existence.[125]

That is to say, according to Sharif-Funk and Dickson, what constitutes God’s unity is this very interdependence relationship between God and the world, i.e., that God exists, inasmuch as the world exists. In short, they read Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, as implying somehow, that God cannot exist without the existence of the world. Or that in order for there to be a God, there must exist a world which “ascertains” God’s existence. This, in my view, is at odds with Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. Why?

To begin with, lets reconsider Ibn ‘Arabī’s reference to Bisṭāmī’s saying: when he [Bisṭāmī] asked God “through what may I come near to you?” God answered: “through that which I don’t possess, lowliness and neediness [my emphasis]”. Ibn ‘Arabī wants to accentuate here, God’s un-neediness of anything, including the world.

In addition, as I have already stated, God according to Ibn ‘Arabī, brought about the world, in order to know Himself in a different image (or differently). The world already existed within God’s knowledge, in that it was already perceived by God (in a manner analogous to the way our thoughts exist within our minds) before God bestowed external *existence* upon it.[126] As such, it is not that God is creating something which He had not known at any point in time, or that he creates something he needs. One might ask then, what does it mean “to know Himself in a different image”? What does this very act of bringing about the world signify, if not His neediness of this world?

To this, I reply: it is as if God was hidden or non-manifest (*bāṭin*) before He *created* the world, and then He became manifest (*zāhir*) or *seen* when He brought about the world. As Ibn ‘Arabī says:

> ... God said something whose meaning is this: “I was a Treasure but was not known, so I loved to be known. Then I created the creatures and made Myself

[125] Meena Sharif-Funk and William Rory Dickson (2013): “Traces of Panentheism in Islam: Ibn al-‘Arabi and the Kaleidoscope of Being”. In: *Pantheism Across the World’s Traditions.* Oxford University Press, 148-149.
[126] See William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, 85.

> known to them, so they came to know me" …while "God was, and nothing was with Him". He knew the cosmos from His knowledge of Himself, so He made nothing manifest in engendered existence save what He is in Himself. It is as if He were non-manifest and became manifest through the cosmos.[127]

God's knowledge of the world is nothing but His knowledge of Himself. Which asserts again God's un-neediness of anything. For He alone "suffices for Himself". God's bringing about of the world, as stated in the above passage, does not imply his dependence upon the world, contrary to Sharif-Fund and Dickson's argument. But it is God's *seeking* to manifest *Himself*, which shall not be taken literally, but rather metaphorically, aiming to symbolize God's infinite generosity to His infinite Names. What does this mean?

According to the Šayḫ, God wanted to show His Names (which are infinite and who desired to be known) their actualization in a locus where they could be manifested.[128] Since, insofar as they were within God's knowledge and were unactualized, they had no meaning, they are impotent.[129] This actualization of God's Names in the world signifies, so to speak, God's manifested aspect, which needs a world for actualization. As a consequence, it is God in His manifested aspect that *needs the world*. God in this aspect, is nothing but the actualization of His infinite Names. In contrast, God in His latent or non-manifest aspect is needless. In short, God in His hidden aspect is not dependent upon creation or the world. Instead, it is His Names (in His manifest aspect) who are in need of the world or creation, where they can be manifested and actualized, a thing which God's hidden aspect is needless of.

Accordingly, God, at the very least in His concealed aspect, is not dependent upon the world. And even the dependence of God's Names upon creation is nothing but a metaphor appropriated by the Šayḫ in order to symbolize God's infinite kindness and generosity. As he says:

[127] William Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabī's* Cosmology, 70. See also Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt.* Dār Ṣādir, II, 399.
[128] See Gerald Elmore, "Four Texts of Ibn al-'Arabī on the Creative self-Manifestation of the Divine Names",26. See also Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt.* Dār Ṣādir, I, 100.
[129] See Michael Ebstein, '"In Truth You are the Polytheist!": Mythic Elements in Ibn al-'Arabī's Teachings on the Divine Names"', 365.

> God is needless of the world, and this is negating God's being in need or that anything can indicate Him but Himself. Thus, he brought about the world from His generosity and kindness, and this cannot be suspected by any believer or rational man.[130]

As stated already, God had answered to the yearning of His infinite Names by actualizing their powers in the world. Thus, God is being *generous* and *kind*, to His infinite Names, i.e., to some aspect of Himself. Ultimately, the world is nothing but God's self-disclosure, or strictly speaking, the actualization of His Names. Thus, God's *creation* of the world doesn't render Him dependent upon anything other than Himself and His own act of self-revelation. Since again this self-revelation of God is nothing but an *appeasement* to the aspiration of His infinite Names for a locus where they can be actualized. Indeed, God's Names, are some aspect of Himself, nor does it follow that this is an *appeasement* from God *to* God Himself, for God in His hidden, or inherent aspect, needs nothing as He suffices for Himself – He is perfect and complete. Thus, God's self-disclosure, doesn't imply God's dependence upon anything, nor does it imply an incomplete God, but rather, an expression of generosity and kindness.

Accordingly, it is inexact to hold that God is dependent upon creation in the way that creation is dependent upon God. Thus, contrary to Sharif-Funk and Dickson, it is inaccurate to contend that it is the interdependence or inter-relatedness between God and the world, which constitutes God's unity for Ibn 'Arabī. Moreover, we also see that the analogy between the body and the mind on the one hand and between God and the world on the other hand, which is a powerful variety of panentheism, does not do to justice to Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. As a result, panentheism, in all if its varieties, fails to make sense of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. One might object that these four varieties are not exclusive, that there might be other possible ways to be a panentheist and that one of those might accord with Ibn 'Arabī's *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. However, we should be aware to the fact that, the world according to the panentheist does exist whether it is related to God or not. This, as I have already argued at the end of the previous chapter, is not the case with Ibn 'Arabī, as the phenomenal world,

[130] Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt.* Dār Ṣādir, III, 289, line 29.

which is also the Supreme *Barzaḫ* or the shadow, *does* and does not exist simultaneously.

§ 3.3.2 Pantheism

In its narrow or straightforward sense, pantheism is the thesis that the Universe is identical to God.[131] In line with panentheists, pantheists hold that God is all that there is. However, unlike panentheists, pantheists argue that the world is all that there is too.[132] According to pantheism, there exists nothing outside of God. This doctrine, i.e. God's being identical to the world, might be conceived as *the doctrine of ontological identity*, namely, the doctrine that maintains:

> God is ontologically identical with the world, so that all things in the world are parts or aspects of God, and there is no part or aspect of God which is not a part or aspect of the world.[133]

Pantheism, in addition, seems to espouse the ontological interdependence between God and the world to a far greater extent than panentheism does. That is to say, in pantheism this interdependence is more robust.[134] The interdependence in pantheism occurs only in this actual world, whereas in panentheism God might encompass worlds other than the actual world; since God transcends this world, and thus, might *inhabit* other worlds too.[135] As a result, the analogy between the mind and the body, can be maintained by the pantheist, since God is limited by the world in much the same way that a soul is limited by a body.[136]

[131] See Peter Forrest and Roman Majeran (2016): "Pantheism". In: *Annals of* Philosophy. Vol 64, Issue 4. Published by John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, 67. There is a wide agreement that pantheism entails simply that God is identical with the world, resulting in God's immanence, in contrast to God's transcendence in theism. See also: David Ray Griffin (20104): *Panentheism and Scientific Naturalism.* Process Century Press; Elizabeth D. Burns (2018): "How to prove the existence of God: an argument for conjoined panentheism". In: *International Journal of Philosophy of Religion in press*, 6. Andrei A. Buckareff and Yujin Nagasawa (2016): *Alternative Concepts of God: Essays on the Metaphysics of the Divine.* Oxford University Press, 93; Andrei Buckareff and Yujin Nagasawa, "Guest editorial preface: special issue on pantheism and panentheism". In: *International Journal for Philosophy of* Religion, *in pres*s, 2.
[132] See Mikael Stenmark, "Panenthiesm and its neighbors", 28.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136]In contrast to panentheism, where God is not exhausted by the world. See Ibid.

Thus, in accordance with the above depiction of pantheism, it seems that it does not account for Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, since it argues that God is immanent in this world without transcending it. In short, pantheism, omits the crucial *dialectic* or polarity of immanence-transcendence to be found in Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd.*

‘Affīfī, seems to be aware of this polarity in Ibn ‘Arabī’s system,[137] however, he incorporates it into the pantheism he ascribes to Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. He writes:

> on any pantheistic doctrine either God or the universe is bound to suffer: either the phenomenal world, as we know it, is a mere illusion, the Real being God alone; or God is a mere fabrication of the human mind, and the phenomenal world is the only Reality. Ibnul ‘Arabī chooses the former alternative as we shall see in the section on pantheism.[138]

And then in the pantheism section, ‘Affīfī says:

> Ibnul ‘Arabī’s theory of Reality is a pantheistic one. It is summed up in his own few words “glory be to God who created things, being Himself their essences (*a’yānuhā*)”.[139]

‘Affīfī’s conception of Ibn ‘Arabī’s pantheism, as follows from the above cited passages, is *dialectic*. On the one hand, it embraces the existence of the cosmos, as God; on the other hand, it claims that the cosmos is an illusion and not real. Put in another way, ‘Affīfī unpacks the claim that the phenomenal world is God/not God. The many (or the phenomenal world of creation (ḫalqq)) are different from God, yet at the same time they are identical to Him. This can be explicated through the terms *Tashbīh* and *Tanzīh*, designating Immanence and Transcendence, respectively. God is immanent in everything in the phenomenal world; however, He is transcendent since His essence is not limited to any being; that is, God is beyond limitation and individuation.[140]

[137] See A.E. 'Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhid Din Ibnul Arabi*, 21.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid, 54.
[140] Ibid, 18-19.

‘Affīfī is right in his deep insight of Ibn ‘Arabī’s God, as an immanent/ transcendent God. Nevertheless, this depiction does not tally with pantheism’s fundamental tenets, which – as already argued – embraces one aspect of this polarity, namely, immanence. Furthermore, this transcendence/ immanence doesn’t tally completely with Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Waḥdat al-Wuğūd*, according to which the supreme *Barzaḫ* which is the phenomenal world, *does* and does not exist. Since it can be inferred from this transcendence/ immanence polarity, that the world exists and, and it does not accommodate a contradiction as is the case with the Supreme *Barzaḫ*.[141]

In addition, it follows from the analysis ‘Affīfī gives, that the *dialectic* he attributes to this transcendence/immanence is static. He argues that the *dialectical* element is only logical (i.e. formal).[142] By presenting this *dialectic* of transcendence/immanence as static, ‘Affīfī ignores a crucial principle of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s system, namely the principle of the endless dynamic, unfolding, actualization of the Divine Names, that designates the eternal appearance of reality into ever higher levels of unity. As Salman Bashier observes:

> [By] presenting this dialectical element merely as a formal principle, he (‘Affīfī) overlooks the most fundamental notion of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s thought, the notion of actuality that signifies the ceaseless unfolding of reality and its emergence into ever higher levels of unity.[143]

The infinite recurrence of theophanies – that are renewed (in their formal aspect but are different in their content) – gives expression to God’s unity. The emergence of unrepeated revelations, each and every moment, emphasizes their unceasingly deep and intimate relation to God, without which their existence would be absurd. This very emergence of revelations designates God’s eternal *omnipresence* in time and space. Thus, it implies deeper and deeper levels of the presence of God in the

[141]Again, one might object and argue that there might be other interpretations of pantheism that might accord with Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Waḥdat al-Wuğūd*. However, the world according to the pantheist, similar to the panentheist, does exist which is not the case with Ibn ‘Arabī. Since again, for him the world *does* and does not exist.
[142] A.E. 'Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhid Din Ibnul Arabi*, 60.
[143] Salman Bashier, *Ibn al-'Arabī's Barzakh: The concept of the limit and the relationship between God and the world*, 5.

universe, which amounts to manifesting higher or stronger levels of oneness of Being, each passing moment.

Moreover, ‘Affîfî argues that Ibn al- ‘Arabī’s *pantheism*, which maintains a static unity, as described above, conflicts with the Orthodox God of Islam.[144] ‘Affîfî’s failure to recognize the dynamic nature of God’s transcendence/immanence is what causes him to misinterpret the true meaning of these “paradoxes”. For the “paradoxes” that ‘Affîfî talks about, such as the fact that,

> God’s Names have no meaning without the phenomenal world on the one hand, and that God existed and was described by all His Divine Names before and independently of the phenomenal world on the other hand,[145]

Are intrinsic to Ibn al-‘Arabī’s thought, and not mere corollaries of some hidden tension.[146] The fact that the Divine Names “yearned” to be known, is (so to speak) a yearning to be known in a different way, as argued already. It means that their actualization is different from their original state in God. Moreover, this yearning juxtaposed with the contemplation in the mirror, mentioned already, are only metaphors, and they don’t refer to events that happen *in* time. This means that the Šayḫ is not committed to there being some moment at which God is incomplete, unfulfilled, or yearning. Rather, the “creation” itself is an eternal, dynamic, process that, so to speak, makes sure that God should never have reason, in time, to yearn.

§ 3.3.3 Priority Monism

Another reading of *Waḥdat al-Wuğūd*, has been made in terms of Priority Monism. Priority Monism is a metaphysical theory which argues that the whole cosmos is ontologically prior to its parts.[147] Sean Butler, in his “Monistic Interpretations of

[144]See Abū al- ‘Ilā ‘Affîfî, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhid Dīn-Ibnul ‘Arabī*, 34. See also Salman Bashier, *Ibn al- ‘Arabī’s Barzakh: The concept of the limit and the relationship between God and the world*, 57.
[145] Abū al- ‘Ilā ‘Affîfî, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhid Dīn-Ibnul ‘Arabī*, 34. See also Ibid.
[146] See also Salman Bahsier *Ibn al- ‘Arabī’s Barzakh: The concept of the limit and the relationship between God and the world*, 5.
[147] For more elaboration upon *Priority Monism* and its “three main threads” all of which involve that there is a whole and parts. See Jonathan Schaffer, “The Priority of the Whole”. In: *Philosophical Review*. Vol, 119, Issue 1. Cornell University.

Tawheed in the Sufi Notion of *Wahdat al-wujud*," adopts this reading. Butler holds that:

> 'Arabi's monism…maintains that only God exists, but also claims that there is ontic status to things that are both existent and lack full or complete existence. All objects other than God, in fact, can exist separately from God because they express a lack of existence. In this way 'Arabi's philosophy is not existence monism or pantheism but priority monism.[148]

First and foremost, things in Ibn 'Arabī's *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* do not exist separately from God, be they characterized by lacking, or full existence, or any other sort of being. Everything is God's manifestation, and as such, nothing exists without being intimately connected to God. This intimacy is more immediate than the sort of ontological grounding posited by the Priority Monist. Put differently, as God's theophanies, things express God's infinite essence, as such, they express nothing separate from God.

Moreover, *Priority Monism* implies that the multiplicity exists, in spite of the fact that this multiplicity depends upon a single object.[149] And this fact seems to be Butler's point of departure.[150] That is, it seems that he attempts to attribute some level of existence to things other than God, in Ibn 'Arabī; but as we have noted already, this is not the case. It is not that other things exist, for Ibn 'Arabī, but that everything other than God, is both *existent* and *non-existent*. Put in a different manner, priority monism might be a good candidate for uncovering Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, were Priority Monism to embrace contradictions. Then it could say that (1) everything other than God is existent but, dependent upon God, and that (2) these things also don't exist. But, Priority Monism, in itself, doesn't endorse contradictions. Ibn 'Arabī, by contrast, *does*. Theistic Priority Monists would endorse (1) and deny (2). Ibn 'Arabī endorses (1) *and* (2).

Thus, we cannot ignore the apparent contradiction in *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* and pretend, with the priority monists, that Ibn 'Arabī merely thinks that God's creations

[148] Sean Butler (2011): "Monistic Interpretations of *Tawheed* in the Sufi Notion of *Wahdat al-wujud*". Unpublished Manuscript,17.
[149] Jonathan Schaffer, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole", 32.
[150] See Sean Butler, "Monistic Interpretations of *Tawheed* in the Sufi Notion of *Wahdat al-wujud*", 3. See also, Jonathan Schaffer, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole", 37-39, where Schaffer argues for three main threads for priority monism, all of which presuppose that the multiplicity exists.

are "lacking full or complete existence". In actual fact, for Ibn 'Arabī, the existence of beings other than God, are similar to the line which separates between the shadow and the sun: you cannot say that the line exists, yet at the same time, you cannot say that it does not exist.

§ 3.4 *Waḥdat al- Wuǧūd* and the *Gluon* theory

As I attempted to demonstrate throughout this chapter, this doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, has been widely misinterpreted by various scholars. I argued that, several endeavours to reduce it to other doctrines such as pantheism, and panentheism have failed to account for its rationale and its blatant embrace of contradictions. For this reason, I contend that we need to endorse a new approach.

In order to do this, (and building on a suggestion made by Behnam Zolghadr), I appeal to *gluon* theory, advanced by Graham Priest in his book: *One: Being an Investigation into the Unity of Reality and its Parts, including the Singular Object which is Nothingness*. First, we shall understand what Priest means by a gluon.

The gluon of an object according to Priest, is what brings about the unity of this object. Underlying this reckoning, is that each complex thing is a unity, which is comprised of more than one part. The gluon is what is responsible for *gluing* these parts into a unity: "A thing is not merely a plurality of parts: it is a unity. There must, therefore, be something which constitutes them as a single thing, a unity. Let us call it, neutrally… the *gluon* of the object, g."[151]

The notion of a gluon is contradictory since it must be both an object and not an object. A gluon must be an object since we think about it and, *refer* to it. Yet it is not an object, since if it were, then this would require another gluon to glue all the parts of that object, including the given gluon, together – call it a hyper-gluon; issuing in a vicious regress.[152]

The gluon is both an object and not an object; a constituent of the complex whole it glues together, and also *not* a constituent of that whole. Accordingly, the

[151] Graham priest (2014): *One: Being An Investigation into the Unity of Reality and of its Parts, including the Singular Object which is Nothingness*. Oxford University Press, 9.
[152] Ibid, 11.

gluon of an object X is both identical and non-identical with each constituent part of X. That is, for an object X that has parts $P1,\ldots,P_n$, its *gluon* g satisfies the formula: $\forall P_n\ (g = P_n)$, and $\forall P_n (g \neq P_n)$. Given the transitivity of identity, and the identity of g with each part of X – $P1,\ldots,P_n$ – you might worry that every part of X must be identical to every other part of X. But gluon theory doesn't operate with classical logic. It adopts a paraconsistent logic. In paraconsistent logic, identity is not transitive. In this logic, identity is only transitive between consistent objects, but since g is an inconsistent object, identity with g will not be transitive. If it were transitive, then Bradley's regress would strike again – and the gluon would fail to do its job.

I will use the boldface word, everything, to mean the fusion of everything that exists, and everything that doesn't exist too. As Priest puts it: "'everything' means absolutely *everything*, every object that there is (whether or not it exists). 'Everything' means the totality of *every object*."[153] Non-existent objects would include Hamlet and Zeus. Since everything is an object, then it is also a unity (*viz*. the unity comprised by all objects – the universe). Consequently, everything itself needs something to bring about its unity. It needs its own gluon, which we can call, g_e, i.e. the gluon of everything. As the gluon of everything, g_e must be identical to every part of everything. Accordingly, $\forall$x $(x = g_e)$.

Furthermore, as a gluon, being non-self-identical, g_e is non-identical to every part of everything. Thus, $\forall$x $(x \neq g_e)$. Moreover, since each and every gluon is also an object, every gluon is part of everything, therefore, each and every gluon is identical to g_e. Hence, $\forall$x $(g_x = g_e)$.

Another important feature of a gluon is what Priest calls *mimicking*:[154]

b mimics *a* iff for every arbitrary property q:

* If $a \in q_+$, $b \in q_+$ [if *a* is a member of the extension of *q*, then so is *b*]

*If $a \in q_-$, $b \in q_-$ [if *a* is a member of the negative extension of *q*, then so is *b*]

Hence, we could notice that g_e mimics every object, for it has the properties of every object, because it is identical to every object.

[153] Ibid, 54.
[154] Ibid, 31.

Now, since Ibn ‘Arabī’s God has no parts, but rather He manifests Himself in the universe, we can give another definition:

a is the manifestation of b iff b mimics a, but a doesn’t mimic b.[155]

That is, according to the Šayḫ, *a* is the manifestation of *b*, iff *b* has all of the properties of *a*, but *a* doesn’t have all the properties of *b*. Now, as we have already clarified, the phenomenal world (i.e. The Supreme *Barzaḫ*) is the He/ not He. We have also argued that, according to Ibn ‘Arabī, it exists and does not exist, since it is an intelligible *barzaḫ* which distinguishes between the absolute non-existence and the Absolute existence. Thus, we can argue that g_e is parallel to Ibn ‘Arabī’s God, as Zolghadr summarizes:

> g_e is identical and non-identical with every object. Being [i.e. Ibn ‘Arabī’s God] is also identical and non-identical with every object. Gluons are simplices. g_e, therefore, is a simplex [non-partite object, i.e. it has no parts]. Being is also a simplex [i.e. God has no parts]. Whatever is an object is a part of everything. Thus, it is identical with g_e.[156]

Zolghadr organizes these claims into a table, in which he translates *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* into *Gluon* theory.[157] See table (a) below:

Gluon theory	Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd
g_e is simplex	Being is simplex
g_e mimics every object	Everything is the manifestation of Being
Every object [whether it exists or not] *is*	Everything exists
∀x $(x = g_e)$	Everything is identical with Being
∀x $(x \neq g_e)$	Everything is non-identical with Being
∀x $(g_x = g_e)$	The existence of every existent object is identical with Being

[155] See also Behnam Zolghadr “The Sufi Path of Dialetheism: Gluon Theory and Wahdat al-Wujud”, 106.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid, 107.

Notice that from the identity, g_e=*Being,* and the non-identity, $g_e \neq$ Being; the mistaken inference, Being ≠ Being, does not follow, since as I have already stated, identity is not transitive for inconsistent objects in a paraconsistent logic.

Though to this point, I follow Zolghadr in his analysis, I disagree with him concerning a pivotal concept, which is the concept of existence in Ibn ʻArabī. Zolghadr argues, following Chittick, that "there are different types of existence",[158] in Ibn ʻArabī's thought. He holds that there is an *external* existence (had by concrete objects), and an *internal* existence. In the light of this distinction, Zolghadr concludes, that – for Ibn ʻArabī – every object exists.[159] This conclusion is mistaken, and therefore Zolghadr's translation of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* into *Gluon* theory is incomplete.

The fusion of all non-existent objects in the Supreme *Barzaḫ*, is the empty fusion – nothing. Nothing does not exist, Priest agrees: "nothing does not exist since, presumably, it is impossible for it to enter into causal interactions with things".[160] You enter an empty room which includes nothing: there is nothing in it – not a single object exists in that room, so nothing is an absolute absence. And yet nothing must also be an object, since we are referring to it, talking and thinking about it. Consequently, nothing is an inconsistent and contradictory object, since it is something (in that we refer to it, and think about it), but it is also the absence of everything, so nothing is nothing.[161]

Now since we do refer to nothing, i.e. it *exists*, then it is part of everything. For everything is the mereological sum of every object whether existing or not. However, since nothing is the absence of everything, i.e. nothing is nothing, then it is also not part of everything. Notice that nothing doesn't resemble non-existent objects such as Hamlet or Zeus, since those objects *do* exist in some sense (in a story or a myth). Rather, nothing, is simply nothing at all, it is an absolute absence. And as Priest says, so is its gluon. The gluon of nothing is nothing.

[158] Ibid, 100.
[159] Ibid, 103.
[160] Graham Priest, *One*, 56.
[161] See Ibid.

As a consequence, the Supreme *Barzaḫ*, or the phenomenal world, which is He/not He, is also identical and non-identical with the gluon of nothing (n which is nothing itself). Therefore, the Supreme *Barzaḫ* would be identical to g_e and to n. That is, it is both the Absolute- existence and the absolute non-existence. Ibn 'Arabī's philosophy isn't complete until we account for non-existent objects.

Therefore, to Zolghadr's table (table a) I add three more lines: first is *n* which is parallel to the "non-being of everything". Second, that n is simplex. The third would be the conjunction of the Supreme *Barzaḫ*'s identity with g_e and with n. This conjunction corresponds with $ge \equiv n$.[162] That is because, being an inconsistent object, we do think about *n* and refer to it, therefore the truth value of $ge = n$ is true. However, since *n* is nothing, it also does not exist and as a result the truth value of $ge \neq n$ is also true; which means that ge has true only. Now, as an absolute nothingness the truth value of, $n \neq ge$ is true, and the truth value of $n = g$ is false. Thus, we wind up with $ge \equiv n$.

Here I translate *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* into Gluon theory as given in table (b) (compare this to table (a) given above):

Gluon theory	Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd
$\boldsymbol{g_e}$ is simplex	Being is simplex
$\boldsymbol{g_e}$ mimics every object	Everything is the manifestation of Being
Every object [whether it exists or not] is	Everything exists in the Supreme *Barzaḫ*
∀x $(\boldsymbol{x = g_e})$	Everything is identical with Being
∀x $(\boldsymbol{x \neq g_e})$	Everything is non- identical with Being
∀x $(\boldsymbol{g_x = g_e})$	The existence of every existent is identical with Being
n is simplex	Non-existence is simplex
n does not exist	Non-existence does not exist

[162] Material equivalence (≡) in paraconsistent logic doesn't work in the same manner it does in classical logic. Since in classical logic the truth of A ≡ B means that both sides have the same truth value. In LP, however, each side can have two different values: for instance, A can have both true and false, and B can have false only. See for instance Behnam Zolghadr "The Sufi Path of Dialetheism: Gluon Theory and Wahdat al-Wujud", 104.

I have confirmed already, that the Supreme *Barzaḫ* is Absolute existence, and Absolute non-existence. And, as we can see from the above table, the Supreme *Barzaḫ* is identical to everything and to nothing. Accordingly, it is the He/ Not He, and is identical also to the gluon of everything and to the gluon of nothing.

Being the He/Not He, the Supreme *Barzaḫ* is not identical with God, at the very least in its "Not He" perspective. It is an inconsistent object. God isn't. It is identical to God, and also not identical to God. It is His shadow and Imagination – it is His manifestation. Therefore, there is after all a distinction between God and the World according to the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. This doctrine *is* compatible with the Qur'ān's (42:11): "There is nothing like unto Him". More importantly, it accords with the next clause of the verse, which might had been overlooked by Ibn Taymiyya "and He is the Hearing, the Seeing"; which *prima facie* sounds as if it's contradicting the previous clause of the verse – nothing like unto Him. However, this expresses God's being manifested in the world – owing to His similarity to His Creatures. In short, this whole verse, summarizes Ibn 'Arabī's whole doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* which emphasizes God's transcendence over the world, yet at the same time, accentuates His self-disclosure in that world. i.e. His similarity with the world. In short, *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* is compatible with the Orthodox God of Islam.

To sum up, commentators' approach towards *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* in Ibn 'Arabī, are divided into two camps: (1) those who do not attribute this doctrine to him, and (2) those who *do.* I have further rejected three different interpretations of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*: (a) Panentheism cannot account for *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd,* even in its most compelling variety, namely, that which makes an analogy between the mind and the body on the one hand, and between God and the world, on the other. The problem with this analogy is that it asserts the interdependence between God and the world. This, as has been shown, does not resonate with Ibn 'Arabī's God, who is dependent upon nothing. The *prima facie* inter-dependence (in the manifest aspect of God), between His Names and the world, is nothing but a metaphor that symbolizes, so to speak, God's infinite kindness and generosity to his infinite Names; (b) Pantheism can also be rejected, since it overemphasizes God's immanence, in other words, the world

does exist according to pantheism, whereas it does and does not exist according to *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. (c) *priority monism*, which holds that the whole is ontologically prior to its parts, cannot accommodate *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, for it bestows a real existence to those parts, which conflicts with Ibn 'Arabī's reckoning, according to which those *parts* (or manifestations) of creation do not have a real existence, or – more accurately – that they both exist *and* do not exist. Having rejected these three readings of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, I have argued that, this doctrine can be best understood through an appeal to gluon theory, and claimed that it has a structure similar to this theory – the supreme *Barzaḥ*, which is Absolute existence and Absolute non-existence, is identical to the gluon of everything and to the gluon of nothing. [163]

[163] It is worth mentioning, that the identity here does not allude to an identity between *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* and gluon theory, since each of these theories have different purposes. In the case of gluon theory, it aims to explain unity, and God is not what underlies this unity. In contradistinction, *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* attempts to demonstrate, as we have seen already, that God is the only real existence and that everything else, is just a mere reflection or a manifestation of Him.

§ Chapter IV: Possible Criticism of the Thesis and replies

I have explicated the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* in terms of gluon theory. But how can an interpretation of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* be charitable if it winds up tying it to dialetheism and gluon theory? In this chapter, I will first address some fundamental objections to dialetheism and reply to them. Then I will consider two objections to gluon theory.

My aim is not to prove that gluon theory or dialetheism are true, for indeed they are controversial. Rather, my goal is to show that they don't obviously crumble in the face of their critics. If they meet, at least this condition, then it can't be said that my reading of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* is intolerable. Moreover, explaining *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* in terms of dialetheism might be valuable, even if it is controversial whether dialetheism really makes sense; for such an explanation would reduce the problem of making sense of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* to that of making sense of dialetheism. It's not as if *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* is a straightforward doctrine that I have somehow complicated. On the contrary, if *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* can be understood in terms of dialetheism, then we can appeal to a wealth of literature that seeks to make sense of dialetheism in order to make sense of Ibn 'Arabī.

§ 4.1 Objections to Dialetheism and replies:

In "What Is So Bad About Contradictions?",[164] Priest enumerates five main objections to dialetheism, and replies to them. Addressing these objections is a way of showing that my interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī is charitable. Here I will consider these objections, summarize and comment upon Priest's replies:

1. Contradictions entail everything.
2. Contradictions can't be true.
3. Contradictions can't be believed rationally.
4. If contradictions were acceptable, people could never be rationally criticized.
5. If contradictions were acceptable, no one could deny anything.

[164] Graham Priest (2004): "What's So Bad About Contradictions?", In: *The Law of Non-Contradiction: New Philosophical Essays*, 23-38.

(1)- Contradictions entail everything:

This is the result of this argument:

I) Any explicit contradiction entails every proposition.

II) By (I), if dialetheism is true, then every proposition is true.

III) It is not the case that every proposition is true.

IV) From (II) and (III): dialetheism is false.

The first premise of this argument can be called the explosion principle. But this principle is a consequence of classical logic, accordingly, we can predict how Priest will reply:

> Priest: the mere assertion of dialetheism automatically (and necessarily) involves the rejection of classical logic – and, in particular: the principle of bivalence (that every statement has *exactly one* of the values 'true' and 'false') on which it relies.

If you assume bivalence, and you allow for true contradictions, then you cannot construct a proof for any proposition at all. Let P∧¬P be our true contradiction, and let Q be any proposition you like, however absurd. The following argument will be sound:

1. P is true (because we are assuming that both P and ¬P are true).
2. Therefore: P∨Q.
3. But since ¬P is true, Q follows from 2.

But line 3 of this argument requires the assumption of bivalence. It assumes that if ¬P is true then P *isn't* true, because it assumes that truth or falsehood, and never both, are the only values a proposition can have. If you reject bivalence, you reject line 2 of this argument, and you thereby reject the explosion principle.

Dialetheism is the rejection of bivalence. The explosion principle is only generated on the assumption of bivalence. This argument against dialetheism begs the question.

(2)- Contradictions can't be true:

This objection is just an assertion of the law of Non-Contradiction (LNC). Priest considers four grounds for endorsing LNC.[165] He argues that none of them are compelling. Here I will consider one such ground:[166]

- Contradictions have no meaning or no content.[167]

Priest replies that some contradictions do have meaning or content, since if they don't, there would be nothing to disagree upon when someone utters a contradiction, which there (usually) is. One might reply, can't I accept that explicit contradictions have content, and still subscribe to the standard view that they are false?

To this I could reply: we are not arguing that every meaningful contradiction is true; rather, we are arguing that the meaninglessness of contradictions is not a good reason to rule out, a priori, the possibility that some contradictions are true. Why not? Because contradictions, even when false, are not *ipso facto* meaningless.

But you might think that contradictions must be meaningless on the grounds that we could never imagine a contradiction being true. And yet, there are times when contradictions do seem like an attractive way of speaking. For example, we might want to describe an adolescent as both an adult and not an adult. Or, we might want to describe a person being both bald and not bald, as Dominic Hyde puts it: "There are people who are borderline cases of baldness, so they are… neither uniquely determined to be bald nor uniquely determined to be not bald".[168] Of course, there is a voluminous literature on how to deal with vagueness from within the confines of classical logic. But if we are trying to show that dialetheism isn't obviously beyond the pale, we may have done enough simply to point to cases where we might intuitively reach towards contradictory ways of speaking, such as "he is bald and not bald".

[165] Ibid, 30.
[166] I referred to one ground only, since cconsidering all the grounds, falls beyond the scope of this chapter.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Dominic Hyde (2013): "Are the Sorites and Lar Paradox of a Kind?". In: *Paraconsistency: Logic and Applications*. Edited by Koji Tanaka, Francesco Berto, Edwin Mares and Francesco Paoli, Springer, 353.

(3)- Contradictions can't be believed rationally.

No rational person would believe a contradiction. If contradictions could be true, then they wouldn't be automatically ruled by the dictates of rationality. Accordingly, contradictions can't be true.

Reply: first of all, rational people do believe contradictions, all the time. Priest points out that a person with completely consistent beliefs is a rare phenomenon. You might respond that rational people never wittingly or willingly believe a contradiction, but Priest thinks he can find counterexamples even to that claim. It seems to me that, if we want to know what rational people are able to believe, we will have to appeal to empirical evidence. I have already noted that we can sometimes find ourselves asserting claims that are *prima facie* contradictions, when faced with vagueness. The classical logician may have ways of explaining these apparent contradictions away, but perhaps we have done enough to show that dialetheism isn't hopeless, or that it wouldn't be intolerably uncharitable to attribute the view to Ibn 'Arabī.

(4) If contradictions were acceptable, people could never be rationally criticized.

According to this objection, if contradictions were acceptable, no one could be rationally criticized. That is, if you hold a contradiction, then you can hold any other view. Any other view you might have, could be still rational. Rationality is not a restriction for one's own views.

Reply: this argument is similar to the explosion argument, which makes a slide from some to all. That is, it assumes that if any contradiction is true then every other view is also true. However, as I have attempted to demonstrate in (1) that is not the case. For again, if you do accept the contradiction: "the man is bald and not bald", that doesn't mean that you must automatically accept any other view. So, the rejection of classical logic doesn't immediately license any old way of thinking. Moreover, it's possible to be irrational even *within* the confines of classical logic. For instance, you can claim that you are a fried egg, without violating the laws of classical logic. That doesn't make it rational!

(5)- if contradictions were acceptable, no one could deny anything.[169]

If we allow for true contradictions, then whenever someone asserts a negation, ¬α, it will not mean that he rejects or denies α, since he might accept both α and ¬α. How then will it ever be possible to deny anything?

Reply: the argument assumes that denying a proposition and asserting its negation are the same thing. Although this assumption, holds in most cases; there are still exceptions to it. For instance, if I say that I am not a man, then I am denying that *I am a man*. However, this doesn't hold in every case. When I say for instance that "I am bald and not bald", I am asserting the negation of "being bald", since I state that I am not bald. However, I am not denying the negation of "being bald", since I also say that "I am bald". For I am both bald and not bald. Thus, the negation of something doesn't always entail the denying of it. Once again, the classical logician will find ways to cope with these apparent exceptions, but their existence might be enough for our purposes. They show, once again, that dialetheism doesn't crumble as quickly as one might have expected, in the face of criticism.

§ 4.2 Objections to gluon theory and replies

Gluon theory was also employed in my explication of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. This theory, like dialetheism, faces several objections. I would like to address two of those objections here; if only to demonstrate, once again, that my reading of Ibn 'Arabī can't be accused of being intolerably uncharitable.

Objection I

In his article "Priest's Hyper- Dialetheist Solution to the problem of Unity", Sungil Han, addresses two main claims of gluon theory, which he refers to as (G1) and (G2):

(G1) A gluon is an object; and it is not an object.

[169] Graham Priest (2004): "What's So Bad About Contradictions?", In: *The Law of Non-Contradiction: New Philosophical Essays*,36.

(G2) A gluon is identical to each of the distinct things that compose a single thing.

Han argues that, given (G2), Bradley's regress provides no good reason for accepting (G1).[170] Meaning to say that, if we assume that (G2) is right, we could block Bradley's regress without accepting (G1). His point is that you could adopt a less radical gluon theory. Han's argument is as follows:

Assume both (G1) and (G2). Let *a* and *b* be two distinct parts of an object, *c*. Let *a* and *b* be consistent parts. Let *g* be a gluon that unites *a* and *b* into *c*. Given (G1), Han argues, there will be some property F, such that: F*g* and ¬F*g*. Now, given (G2), *g*=a and *g*=b. So, the property F such that Fg and ¬F*g* cannot be the property of "being an object", since if it was, then either *a* or *b* would not be an object, which is absurd. We started with consistent objects – *a*, *b*, and *c*:

> If $g = a$ and $g = b$, since $a \neq b$, for some property F had by one of *a* and *b* but not by the other, F*g* and ¬F*g*. What property [could] F would be? If F were the property of being an object, *g* would be an object that is not an object, so (G1) would after all be true. However, no matter what property F may be, F can't be the property of being an object. Recall that F is a property had by one of *a* and *b*. So, if F were the property of being an object, either *a* or *b* would not be an object. But *a* and *b* are each an object (and actually consistent object[s])[171].

Han concludes that *g* does the binding without being a non-object. (G2) is true, but (G1) isn't.

To begin with, it seems that Han's argument relies upon the "indiscernibility of identicals": (INoID) from $\alpha = \beta$ and $F(\beta)$, infer $F(\alpha)$. Indeed, Han argues as follows:

Since *a* is distinct from *b*, there is some property *F* that exactly one of *a* and *b* has. For some F, suppose that:

1.*Fa*

And,

[170]Sungil Han (2017): "Priest's Hyper- Dialetheist Solution to the problem of Unity". In: *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*. Vol 25, Issue, 4, 546.
[171] Ibid.

2.¬*Fb*

We also have, given (G2)

3. *g* = *a*

And also,

4.*g* = *b*

From (1) and (3), by (INoID),

5. *Fg*.

Also, from (2) and (4), by (INoID)

6.¬*Fg*.

First thing to note is that even Han has to deny INoID. This undermines the force of his argument. Han accepts that g=a and that g=b, and also accepts that a ≠ b. This requires him to deny INoID. Since it winds up in a contradiction (*Fg* and ¬*Fg*). So even he can't accept his argument.

Secondly, Priest's theory entails that *g* will have numerous inconsistent properties. It will have the property of *being a*, a property which it inherits from *a,* and it will also have the property of *not being a*, a property which it inherits from *b*. So, there are all sorts of candidates other than the property of *being an object* that Priest will allow to play the role of F, in Han's argument. But that doesn't entail that (G1) is false. (G1) is true, not because of anything that gluons inherit from the parts of the objects they glue together, but because gluons must be objects if we can talk about them, and they must be non-objects to block Bradley's regress!

Objection II

Another objection to gluon theory is to be found in Takashi Yagisawa's article: "Gluons of Different Colors". Yagisawa argues that he has a better alternative to Priest's gluon theory. He calls it g_y.[172] He holds that his theory is preferable to Priest's gluon theory, which he calls g_p,[173] for three reasons:

[172] See Takashi Yagisawa (2017): "Gluons of Different Colors". In: *International of Philosophical Studies*. Vol 25, Issue, 25, 555.

[173] For matters of convenience I would also call it also as such.

1) It does not require dialetheism or paraconsistent logic.
2) It successfully solves the problem of unity, if the g_p theory does.
3) It gives a better account of generation and corruption.

My aim in this section, is to argue that Yagisawa's alternative is not preferable to Priest's theory. I will attempt to undermine Yagisawa's second reason for preferring g_y. That is, I will argue that g_y is incapable of solving the problem of unity, while g_p is capable. As a result, it will follow that solving the problem of unity *does* require dialetheism.

Instead of identifying $\mathbf{g_y}$ with each of three distinct objects – say *a*, *b*, and *c* separately as in g_p theory; the g_y theory identifies g_y with *a*, *b*, and c together, "g_y is such that *a*, *b* and *c* are identical with it. Here 'are identical with' is to be understood as plural predication".[174]

Yagisawa brings the example of lifting a piano by three men – Al, Bob and Chad.[175] They collaborate and lift a grand piano together. 'lift a piano' according to Yagisawa, is a plural predication. It is a predication of piano-lifting of the three men, and not a predication of piano-lifting of any single being. He continues that if Al, Bob and Chad lift the piano, then it follows that the piano is lifted by Al, Bob and Chad.[176] The predicate applies collectively, but not distributively. This holds, according to Yagisawa, in the problem of unity:

a house is constituted of bricks, clay particles and other parts. The question is, what brings about the unity of the house? The g_y theorist cannot argue that the gluon g_y, which is responsible for the unity of the house, is identical with the bricks and identical with the clay particles and with the other parts. Since it would follow that the bricks are identical with the clay particles and the clay particles are identical with the other parts which is absurd given g_y's commitment to the transitivity of identity. In response, Yagisawa argues that,

[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid, 555-556.
[176] Ibid, 556.

> the g_y theorist can respond to this objection by postulating two distinct gluons for the bricks and clay particles. One of the gluons $g_{yb'}$ unifies the bricks into the house, and the other gluon $g_{yc'}$ unifies the clay particles into the house. A third gluon unifies half-bricks into the house, a fourth gluon unifies molecules into the house, and so on.[177]

Yagisawa holds that this multiplication of gluons does not put the g_y theorist at a disadvantage. And he adds that,

> the g_p theorist is in as much need of postulating different gluons for the clay particles, half-bricks, molecules, etc. Of course, the g_p theorist has an option of claiming that all such gluons are identical with one another (as well as being non-identical with one another). But this does not make the g_p theory more desirable than the g_y theory.[178]

However, I argue, that the g_p theory is still a more desirable theory than the g_y theory in accounting for the problem of unity. First, we need to distinguish briefly between: (1) Mereological Realism and (2) Mereological anti-realism or Mereological nihilism:[179]

Mereological realism holds that complex entities, or mereological composites exist; the ordinary objects such as houses, tables, and books exist. By contrast, Mereological anti-realism or Mereological nihilism, denies this, i.e., it denies that Mereological composites exist, and as a result, denies that ordinary objects such as houses, cars, and chairs exist.

Now, it seems to me that Yagisawa, following his treatment of the issue, should admit that he subscribes to the second view, namely, to Mereological nihilism. That is because, in the example of lifting a Piano by Al, Bob and Chad, the predication, or the property of lifting the Piano, doesn't unite all these three men into a single thing – they remain three "things". The three men collectively instantiate the property, *lifting the piano*, in the same vein that, according to the mereological nihilist – atoms are arranged chair-wise, or book-wise and thereby – collectively instantiate a

[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] See for instance, Jonah P.B. Goldwater (2015): "No Composition, No Problem: Ordinary Objects as Arrangements". In: *Philosophia: Philosophical Quarterly of Israel*. Vol 43, Issue 2, 367-379.

property, without becoming a single entity. Similarly, each gluon of each collection of parts that are responsible for "bringing about a house" – the $g_{yb'}$, for instance, doesn't really give us a house, but rather things that are arranged house-wise. So, Yagisawa's gluons fall short of giving him a unity, which means that, unless he's just a mereological nihilist in disguise, he should demand more from his gluons. Yagisawa's, g_y theory doesn't really give us any unity, but rather, things that are arranged in a unity-like or unified-like ways.

On the other hand, Priest's gluons do more than Yagisawa's: they take various entities and make a house out of them – they make a one over many. Indeed, Priest's gluons, owing to their inconsistency, can bind the multiplicity of the parts into a house, without falling into an infinite regress. This means that, if you want to be a Mereological realist – arguing for the existence of ordinary composite objects – you will need inconsistent gluons doing the binding job for you. In which case, you will need the g_p theory. Otherwise, i.e. if you wish to achieve unified-like things, or things that do not grant you a unity, then you might wind up subscribing to Mereological nihilism, thereby denying that ordinary objects exist.

In conclusion I have considered five arguments against dialetheism, which are addressed also by Priest. The second argument being the most powerful and common argument, is to the effect that contradictions cannot be true. This argument appeals to LNC. I have discussed one form of it: that contradictions can't be true – that they have no meaning or no content. However, I have argued that there might be meaningful contradictions that seem to be true: "the man is bald and not bald".

Then I addressed two objections to gluon theory. The first objection which is furthered by Han, argues that the gluon cannot be both an object and not an object (by rejecting (G1)). I argued that Han's argument, relies upon a principle that he himself cannot accept, namely, the INoID principle. The second objection is argued by Yagisawa, who holds that the problem of unity can be solved by *his* theory, namely, the g_y theory. However, I have contended that the g_y theory fails to do so, since it doesn't grant us really unified objects or a unity, but rather a unified-like ways.

Thus, this chapter argues that, neither set of objections (to Dialetheism and to the gluon theory) are compelling enough to render my interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's theory of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, somehow intolerable. That is because these objections

do not undermine gluon theory, to which I appeal in order to account for *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, or put it at a serious disadvantage. Hence, explicating *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* in terms of gluon theory may still valuable even if it is controversial.

Lastly, for those who cannot accept dialetheism, Ibn ʻArabī might respond: as soon as you do accept that there is a perfect Being[180] who is infinite and Absolute, then you might *have* to accept the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* – and you will accept it as soon as you *experience* that Being. In which case he might say that as soon as one carries through a mystical experience, following the path that Ibn ʻArabī and his followers adhere to; one comes to understand that this world *does* and *does* not exist. This experience emphasizes the non-existence of the world vis-à-vis the absolute existence of the Real yet at the same time it accentuates its existence (as the mystic still exists after the experience). As a consequence, the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* might give the mystic a good reason to embrace a logic which endorses contradictions. In which case, gluon theory, built upon dialetheism, can provide a good framework, even if the mystic wouldn't have been attracted to gluon theory before their mystical experience.

A fair response would be that a mystical experience is a hallucination or that only a few have succeeded in attaining such experiences. I would respond: even if only a few succeed, this would suffice for Ibn ʻArabī who asserts that this experience is not universal and that only very few have the potential to carry through an experience and to attain to the truth of Being. And whether this experience is a mere delusion or a hallucination, is beyond the scope of this paper.

[180] And for those whom Perfect Being does not make any sense, neither logic of contradictions nor classical logic, are of any relevance.

§ Conclusion

Ibn al-'Arabī's doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, or *Oneness of being*, has been widely misinterpreted. Scholars have struggled to demonstrate whether it can be attributed to the Šayḫ or not. Sticking to Ibn 'Arabī's texts, I have demonstrated that it can be attributed to him. A strong passage I have referred to, states that "There is nothing in existence save God, His names, and His acts".[181] This emphasizes that there is nothing in existence but God and His manifestations, which are the actualization of His Names, who express His essence. This means that there is nothing which is not intimately related to God. Being belongs to God alone. In short *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*. This whole doctrine is expressed also in the metaphor of the mirror where God had gazed into the mirror of absolute non-existence and as a result the world had been given *existence.* This metaphor exposes and underlies *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd'*s primary conceptions such as the conception of fixed entities, which are the realities or the forms of the Divine Names; and the Cloud which is the *breath* that God exhales when He reveals to His Names those fixed entities. This metaphor, namely, the metaphor of the mirror, explains the dual *barzaḫī* character of those notions. i.e. their embrace of existence – as they meet Absolute existence, and of non-existence, as they meet absolute non-existence. In short, this is a contradictory character.

The metaphor of the mirror accommodates contradictions that underlie *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*'s basic structure. Thus, any attempt to construe the meaning of this doctrine through appealing to classical logic, is prone to fail. Panentheism being the most compelling example, was refuted with all its varieties including its most threatening one, namely, the *Metaphorical* – which makes an analogy between God and the world on the one hand and between the mind and the body on the other hand. This variety fails to explicate *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, since it renders God dependent upon the world which does not fit with Ibn 'Arabī's God who is dependent upon nothing.

Equipped with dialetheism, a view which does embrace contradictions, where (A ∧¬A), might hold true; this thesis has unpacked the metaphor of the mirror and explained fundamental conceptions that this metaphor gives rise to. For instance, the conceptions of the fixed entities, the Cloud, and the Supreme *Barzaḫ* which designates the phenomenal world. This supreme *Barzaḫ* which meets Absolute

[181] See, Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*. Dār Ṣādir, III, 68.

existence with the same face it meets absolute non-existence is an inconsistent object since it is the He/Not He (*huwa /lā huwa*). Indeed, it *does* and does not exist. I have argued that *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* has a structure similar to that of gluon theory. Being identical to g_e – the gluon of everything, the Supreme *Barzaḫ* which *does* exist is the phenomenal world which is God's manifestations or Shadow. And since it also does *not* exist, which means that it is the absence of everything, it is identical to the gluon of nothing, i.e. it is identical to nothing.

Following this whole discussion, it becomes apparent that the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd* does not conflict with the Orthodox God of Islam. Since it does make a distinction between God and the world which accords with Qur'ān's (42:11): "There is nothing like unto Him". This is so, since the "Not He" designates God's transcendence over the world. On top of that, it resonates with the following clause of this verse: "and He is the Hearing, the Seeing" which alludes to God's immanence in the world; yet this does not designate God's identity with the world, since it is a shadow of Him, and God's shadow is not identical to God Himself.

Lastly, I have resisted various objections to gluon theory and to dialetheism and argued that those objections do not render my reading somehow uncharitable. However, I haven't attempted to prove that these philosophical theories are true. For indeed they are controversial. Rather, my goal was to show that they do shed some light upon the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wuǧūd*, since they render this doctrine, which accommodates contradictions, coherent, and expound the nature of the inconsistent objects and concepts that it incorporates.

Nevertheless, I do admit that there will be some who cannot accept my reading by any means. They might be too committed to a classical logic and its denial of contradictions. Ibn 'Arabī might respond that, in order to endorse a logic of contradictions, one should follow the path he depicts which is limited to a few. This path which is nothing other than the path of unveiling (*Kašf*), or the mystical experience, reveals to the mystic, so to speak, a truth which is beyond the reach of common-sense or that of the intellect – that this world does not have as real an existence as God who is the Absolute existence. Yet at the same time it shows the mystic that this world *does* exist, for as soon as the experience is over, the mystic *continues* to exist. Accordingly, Ibn 'Arabī would say that the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-*

Wuğūd might give the mystic a good reason to endorse a logic that espouses contradictions. In which case, gluon theory, together with dialetheism which underlies its rationale, may constitute a good framework.

Bibliography:

Abrahamov, Binyamin (2015): *Ibn al-'Arabī's Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. An Annotated Translation of "The Bezels of Wisdom*".* Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group*,* London and New York.

Abrahamov, Binyamin (2011): "Ibn al-'Arabī and Abū Yazīd Al-Bisṭāmī". In: *Al-Qanṭara*. Bar- Ilan University.

Abrahamov, Binyamin (2007): "Ibn al-'Arabī's Theory of Knowledge". In: *Journal Of The Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*, Vol, 41.

Abū Zayd, Naṣr Hāmid (2014): *falsafat alta'awīl: derāsa fī ta'awīl al-Qur'ān 'inda muḥī-aldīn bn 'Arabī*. Dār al-wihda Beirut, Lebanon.

Abū Zayd, Naṣr Ḥāmid (2002): *Hakadha Takalama Ibn 'Arabī*. Al-haya'a al-miṣriya al-'āma li-l-kitāb.

Adamson, Peter (2016): *A History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps, Vol 3: Philosophy In The Islamic World*. Oxford University Press.

A.E 'Affīfī, (1963): *Altasawuf: alṯawra al-ruḥiyya fī al-Islām*. *Dār al-Ša'ab li-Ilṭiba'a wa-l-našr.* Beirut.

A.E 'Affīfī (1939): *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhid Dīn-Ibnul 'Arabī.* Cambridge University press, London, the United Kingdom.

Akhbār Al-Ḥallaj Aw Monājayāt al-Ḥallaj (2006). edited by Louis Massignon and Paul Kraus. *Al-takwīn li-ilṭiba'ā wal-nahsar.* Damascus.

Ansari, Abdul Haqq (1999): "The Doctrine of Waḥdat al-Wujūd". In: *Islamic Studies,* Vol. 38, Issue. 2. Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

Atmanspacher, Harald and Sass, Hartmut Von (2017): "The Many Faces of

Panentheism". In: *Zygon.* Vol *52,* issue *4.* Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Avicenna (2005)*: The Metaphysics of The Healing*. A parallel English-Arabic text. Translated, introduced and annotated by, Michael E. Marmura. Brigham Young University Press.

Bashier, Salman (2017): *Nāfiḍa ʻalā al-ghayb bayna Ibn al-ʻArabī wa Ibn Rushd fī al-khayāl w-al-itiṣāl w ma'rifat al-nafs*. Al- Kamel Verlag, Freiburg, Germany.

Bashier, Salman (2004): *Ibn al-ʻArabī's Barzakh: The concept of the limit and the relationship between God and the world*. State University of New York Press, Albany.

Biernacki, Loriliai and Clayton, Philip (2014): *Panentheism Across the World's Traditions.* Oxford University Press.

Bin al-Ṭayeb, Muḥamad (2008): *waḥdat al-Wuǧūd fi al-tasawuf al-islāmī.* Dār al-Ṭalīʻah, Beirut, Lebanon.

Booth, Anthony Robert (2017): *Analytic Islamic Philosophy.* Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Bretzke, James T (1998): *Consecrated Phrases: A Latin Theological Dictionary: Latin Expressions Commonly Found in Theological Writings*. Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota.

Buckareff, Andrei and Nagasawa, Yujin (2019): "Guest editorial preface: special issue on pantheism and panentheism". In: *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, in press.*

Buckareff, Andrei A. and Nagasawa, Yujin (2016): *Alternative Concepts of God: Essays on the Metaphysics of the Divine.* Oxford University Press.

Burns, Elizabeth D. (2018): "How to prove the existence of God: an argument for

conjoined panentheism". In: *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion in press.*

Butler, Sean (2011): "Monistic Interpretations of *Tawheed* in the Sufi Notion of *Wahdat al-wujud*". Unpublished Manuscript.

Chittick, William (2011): *In Search of the lost heart: explanations in Islamic thought.* State University of New York Press.

Chittick, William (1998): *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabī's Cosmology*. State University of New York Press.

Chittick, William (1989): *The Sufi Path Of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabī Metaphysics of Imagination*. State University Of New York Press.

Clayton, Philip (1997): *God and Contemporary Science.* Edinburgh University Press.

Corbin, Henry (1969): *Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn 'Arabī*. Library Editions: Islam.

Cornell, Vincent. J (2007): *Voices of Islam*. Prager Publishers. Post Road West, Westport, United States of America.

Crescas, Ḥasdai (2018): *Light Of The Lord*. Translated with introduction and notes by Roslyn Weiss. Oxford University Press.

Culp, John (2017): "Panentheism". In: *the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta.

Ebstein, Michael (2018): "The Circular Vision of Existence: from Ismā'īlī writings to the works of Ibn al- 'Arabī". In: *Shii Studies Review,* Vol 2, Issue 1-2. NV, Leiden.

Ebstein, Michael (2018): "In Truth You are the Polytheist!": Mythic Elements in Ibn al-'Arabī's Teachings on the Divine Names". In: *Intellectual History of The*

Islamicate World, Vol 6, Issue 3. Bril, NV, Leiden.

Ebstein, Michael (2014): *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al- 'Arabī and the Ismā'īlī Tradition*. Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Elmore, Gerlad (2001): "Four Texts of Ibn al-'Arabī on the Creative Self-Manifestation of the Divine Names". In: the *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society,* Vol XXIX.

Ernst, Carl. W (1985): *Words of Ecstasy*. State University of New York Press, Albany.

Feldman, Seymour (2003): *Philosophy in a Time of Crisis: Don Isaac Abravanel , Defender of the Faith*. Routledge Curzon Jewish Studies Series.

Fenton, Paul. Band and Gloton, Maurice (1993): "The Book of the Description of the Encompassing Circles". In: *Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi: a Commemorative Volume*. Ed. Stephen Hirtenstein and Michael Tiernan, Shaftesbury.

Forrest, Peter and Majeran, Roman (2016): "Pantheism". In: *Annals of Philosophy*, Vol. 64, Issue 4. Published by, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin.

Garb, Bradley Armour (2004): "Diagnosing Dialetheism". In: *The Law Of Non-Contradiction: New Philosophical Essays*. Edited by, Graham Priest, JC Beall, And Bradley Armour-Garb. Clarendon Press, Oxford University.

Gasser, Georg (2019): "God's omnipresence in the world: on possible meanings of 'en' in panentheism". In: *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion.* Vol 85, Issue1.

Goldwater, Jonah P.B (2015): "No Composition, No Problem: Ordinary Objects as Arrangements". In: *Philosophia: Philosophical Quarterly of Israel*, Vol 43, Issue 2. PP.367-379.

Griffin, David Ray (2014): *Panentheism and Scientific Naturalism.* Process Century Press.

Han, Sungil (2017): "Priest's Hyper-Dialetheist Solution to the Problem of Unity". In: *International Journal of Philosophical Studies, Vol 25, Issue 4*.

Hirtenstein, Stephen and Notcutt, Martin (2007): *Divine Sayings: The Mishkāt al-anwār of Ibn 'Arabi.* Anqa Publishing, Oxford.

Hyde, Dominic (2013): "Are the Sorites and Liar Paradox of a Kind?". In: *Paraconsistency: Logic and Applications.* Edited by, Koji Tanaka, Francesco Berto, Edwin Mares and Francesco Paoli. Springer.

Ibn al-'Arabī (2010), *al-Futūḥāt al-Makiyya,* Ed. Maḥmood Matarji, 8 Vols. Dār al-fikr, Beirut, Lebanon.

Ibn al-'Arabī (1968), *al-Futūḥāt al-Makiyya,* Volumes I-IV. Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, Lebanon.

Ibn al-'Arabī (1966*): Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, Dār al-kitāb al-'Arabī, Beirut, Lebanon.

Leaman, Oliver (2002): *An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press.

Lebens, Samuel (2014): "God and his imaginary friends: a Hassidic metaphysics". In: *Religious Studies*, Cambridge University Press.

Leiner, Mordechai Yosef (2001): *Living Waters, The Mei HaShiloach: A Commentary On The Torah*. Translated and edited by, Betsalel Philip Edwards. Jason Aronson Book.

Mason, Herbert. W (1995): *Al-Ḥallāj.* Routledge, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data.

Massignon, Louis *(*1913): *Al- Ḥallāj, Kitāb al-Tawāsīn*. Paris Librairie. Ed by Paul

Geuthner.

McGinnis, Jon (2010): *Avicenna*. Oxford University Press.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein (1997): *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna- Suhrawardī- Ibn ʻArabī*. Caravan Books, New York.

Plotinus (2018): *Enneads*. Edited by Lloyd P. Gerson. Translated by, George Boys-Stones, John M. Dillon, Lloyd P. Gerson, R.A.H. King, Andrew Smith and James Wilberding. Cambridge University Press.

Priest, Graham (2014): *One: Being an Investigation into the Unity of Reality and of its Parts, including the Singular Object Which is Nothingness*. Oxford University Press.

Priest, Graham (2004): "What's So Bad About Contradictions?". In: *The Law Of Non-Contradiction: New Philosophical Essays*. Edited by, Graham Priest, JC Beall, And Bradley Armour-Garb. Clarendon Press, Oxford University.

Rosenthal, Franz (1998): "Ibn ʻArabī Between "Philosophy" And "Mysticism": "Sufism and Philosophy Are Neighbors and Visit Each Other" fa-inna at-taṣawwuf wa-t-tafalsuf yatajāwarāni wa-yatazāwarāni". In: *Oriens,* Vol 31, PP.1 -35.

Schaffer, Jonathan (2010): "Monism: The Priority of the Whole". In: *Philosophical Review,* Vol.119, Issue 1. Cornell University.

Sharif-Funk, Meena and Dickson, William Rory (2013): "Traces of Panentheism in Islam: Ibn al- ʻArabi and the Kaleidoscope of Being". In: *Panentheism Across the World's Traditions.* Oxford University Press.

Stenmark, Mikael (2019): "Panentheism and its neighbors". In: *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion.* Vol 85, Issue 1.

Yagisawa, Takashi (2017): “Gluons of Different Colors”. In: *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*. Vol 25, Issue, 4.

Zolghadr, Behnam (2018): “The Sufi Path of Dialetheism: Gluon Theory and Wahdat al-Wujud”. In: *History and Philosophy of Logic*. Vol 39, Issue 2. Taylor and Francis Group.

ה-הוא/לא הוא: וחדת אלוג'וד אצל אבן ערבי, והגלואון של ההפכים.

סולטאן סלותי

<u>תקציר</u>

דוקטרינת וחדת אלוג'וד או "אחדות ההוויה", עוסקת ביחס שבין האחדות (*וחדה*) לבין ההוויה (*וג'וד*). הדוקטרינה מצהירה באופן שאיננו משתמע לשתי פנים, שישנו רק יש אחד שהוא בעל קיום אמיתי והיש הזה הנו לא אחר מלבד האל; כל "יש" אחר אשר קיים במציאות הנו רק השתקפות או התגלמות של אל זה.

ישנו וויכוח די אינטנסיבי לגבי השאלה אם ניתן לייחס דוקטרינה זו לפילוסוף והמיסטיקן מוחי-אלדין אבן ערבי. אולם, אם נשתדל לעקוב אחרי קו מחשבתו של אבן ערבי, נתקשה לדחות את הדוקטרינה הזו. וויכוח זה נובע מהעובדה שדי קשה לתפוס איזושהי קורספונדנציה בין הדוקטרינה הזו לבין מחשבתו של אבן ערבי. בשום מקום בכתביו אין אבן ערבי מצהיר באופן מפורש שהוא מחזיק בדוקטרינה הזו. הראשון לייחס את וחדת אלוג'וד לאבן ערבי, היה התיאולוג אבן תימיה (1328). למרות זאת, תפיסתו של האחרון היא שדוקטרינה זו הינה לא פחות מאשר כפירה באל האורתודוקסי של האסלאם. זאת מאחר ולדידו של אבן תימיה, הדוקטרינה איננה מצליחה להבחין בין האל לבין שאר הבריות. נראה כי, אבן תימיה מתבסס על פסוקים מהקוראן אשר מדגישים את הפער או ההבדל בין האל לבין היקום. למשל, פסוק (42:11) אומר: "אין דומה לו".[182] פסוק זה, כמו פסוקים רבים אחרים, מבטא את הטרנסצנדנטיות של האל ביחס לעולם. ברם, החלק השני של הפסוק, מביע משמעות שונה ואף מנוגדת לחלק הקודם: "והוא השומע והמבחין". הכוונה בכך ששני החלקים הללו מנוגדים הם, היא שבעוד שהחלק הראשון מבטא את הטרנסצנדנטיות של אלוהים ביחס ליקום, החלק השני מבטא את דמיונו שלו ליקום זה. עבדוה זו, במובן מסוים, תחשוף את משמעותו של פסוק זה ותשתדל להראות שאחדות ההוויה אצל אבן ערבי כן תואמת לתפיסה האורתודוקסית של אלוהים באסלאם.

תזה זו מבקשת לטעון שלושה דברים:

1- אבן ערבי כן מחזיק בדוקטרינה של וחדת אלוג'וד.
2- וחדת אלוג'וד של אבן ערבי בעלת מבנה אשר דומה לזה של תיאוריית הגלואון של גראהאם פריסת.
3- וחדת אלוג'וד אצל אבן ערבי כן הולמת את תפיסת הל האורתודוקסית באסלאם.

[182] אורי רובין (2015): *הקוראן*. (מהדורה ראשונה בהוצאת אוניברסיטת תל אביב, 2005).

העניין המרכזי בוחדת אלוג׳וד אצל אבן ערבי הוא ההדגשה שהעולם הוא ״הוא/לא הוא״. דהיינו, אלוהים לא אלוהים. בכדי לבאר את משמעות ההצהרה הזו, אשר על פניו, נראית כלא עקבית; התזה תטען שאנו צריכים לפנות ללוגיקה שאיננה קלאסית, דוגמת זו אשר מחזיק בה גראהאם פריסט ותורת הגלואון שלו. תורת הגלואון מאמצת את ההשקפה הדיאלית׳יסטית, אשר לפיה ניגודים או הפכים יכולים לדור יחדיו, לאמור, שחיבורם איננו שקרי. בעקבות דיון זה, ולאורך כל העבודה, יהיה ברור כי דוקטרינת וחדת אלוג׳וד הינה קונסיסטנטית עם התפיסה האורתודוקסית של אלוהים.

אלו אשר לא יכולים לקבל דיאלית׳יזם או את תורת הגלואון, יכולים להתנגד לפרשנות שהנני מאמץ כאן לגבי וחדת אלוג׳וד. אפע״כ, די חשוב להפנים שאבן ערבי הוא מיסטיקן, ובתור שכזה הוא נותן משקל משמעותי לחוויה המיסטית. לכן, יכול הוא להגיב, ששעה שמישהו חווה את היש המושלם ביותר, היינו אלוהים, חוויה שהיא מוגבלת למתי מספר, הוא יגיע למסקנה שהעולם הזה ״קיים״ ולא קיים. לכן, מסקנה זו ייתכן ותקנה לו סיבה טובה לאמץ לוגיקה אשר חובקת ניגודים או הפכים. במקרה הזה, דיאלית׳יזם ותורת הגלואון, לאור החוויה המיסטית, ראויות לתשומת לב רצינית.

הוא/לא הוא: וחדת אלוג'וד אצל אבן ערבי, והגלואון של ההפכים.

סולטאן סלותי

בהנחיית

ד''ר ארנון קרן

ד''ר סמואל ליבנס

עבודת גמר מחקרית (תזה) המוגשת כמילוי חלק מהדרישות לקבלת התואר

"מוסמך האוניברסיטה"

אוניברסיטת חיפה

הפקולטה למדעי הרוח

החוג לפילוסופיה

אפריל 2020

הוא/לא הוא: וחדת אלוג'וד אצל אבן ערבי, והגלואון של ההפכים.

סולטאן סלותי

עבודת גמר מחקרית (תזה) המוגשת כמילוי חלק מהדרישות לקבלת התואר

"מוסמך האוניברסיטה"

אוניברסיטת חיפה

הפקולטה למדעי הרוח

החוג לפילוסופיה

אפריל 2020